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FRENCH LEAVE

A Light Comedy in Three Acts

BY
REGINALD BERKELEY

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FRENCH LEAVE

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AUTHOR'S PREFATORY NOTE

IN preparing the text of "French Leave" for publication, I am anxious to record my gratitude to the players, who contributed so greatly to its success, and to Mr. Eille Norwood, who stamped the production with his unmistakable hall-mark of excellence. My indebtedness to Mr. Norwood does not end there, for it is to be attributed to his method and industry that it has been possible to bring out an acting edition containing not only all the producer's notes and stage directions, which greatly amplify my own brief instructions, but also an appendix giving with the minutest detail all the properties, the lighting plot, and the dress charts.

Thank you, my dear Eille, most warmly for the care and skill which you gave to your work.

I have another acknowledgment to make (with much pleasure), and that is to Mr. George de Waarfaz for his help in rendering into colloquial French the part of Madame Denaux.

REGINALD BERKELEY.

THE SAVAGE CLUB,
November 25, 1921.

"French Leave" was produced at the Globe Theatre, London, on July 15, 1920, after four weeks in the provinces, beginning at the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne, on June 7, 1920.

On September 27 the Globe Theatre was required by Miss Marie Löhr for another production; and "French Leave" was transferred to the Apollo, where it ran till March 19, 1921, a total of 278 performances.

The play was revived at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, in January, 1930, and is enjoying a successful run at the time this new edition goes to press.

The cast of the original production was as follows :—

CORPORAL SYKES (Brigade Mess Corporal) . . .	<i>Mr. Charles Groves.</i>
RIFLEMAN JENKS (a Mess Waiter) . . .	<i>Mr. Arthur Riscoe.</i>
MDLLE. JULIETTE	<i>Miss Renée Kelly*.</i>
CAPT. HARRY GLENISTER (his Brigade Major) .	<i>Mr. A. Hylton Allen.</i>
BRIGADIER-GENERAL ARCHIBALD ROOT, C.B., D.S.O.	<i>Mr. M. R. Morand.</i>
LIEUT. GEORGE GRAHAM (Acting Staff Captain) .	<i>Mr. Henry Kendal.</i>
M. JULES MARNIER (the Brigade Interpreter) .	<i>Mr. George de Waarfaz.</i>
MADAME DENAUX (Landlady of Brigade Billet) .	<i>Miss Anna Russell.</i>

SCENE.—The Mess Room of a Brigade resting out of the line “Somewhere in France.”

ACT I. Morning.

ACT II. Evening.

ACT III. Next morning.

* During Miss Kelly's unavoidable absence from the cast during September and October, 1920, the part of Mademoiselle Juliette was taken at short notice by Miss Doris Lytton, to whom the author wishes to take this occasion of conveying his unbounded thanks for the charm and distinction of her performance.



My

FRENCH LEAVE

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Brigade Mess Room.*

A large sparsely-furnished room in a ramshackle French house in the village of Bogusvillers. As it is the most habitable building in the place, it has almost since the beginning of the war constituted the Head-quarters Mess of whatever Brigade happened to be resting in that particular area. The furniture consists of a writing-desk, which at present is littered with official circulars and other documents; a largish oblong table laid for breakfast, with a heterogeneous array of crockery and cutlery; this table is covered with American cloth (loose) and has on it a metal coffee pot, three enamel Army cups and saucers, and plates with common knives and forks, bread, butter in open flat dish, a cut ham, milk, sugar, a white jar labelled "MARMALADE," a similar white jar labelled "MOUTARDE," spoons in each. A fitted wooden seat is in the window recess, and a few straight-backed French chairs. A wooden arm-chair, with 3 inches added to legs to make it high, is at head of table. A semi-military appearance is given to the room by two or three large scale-maps of the North of France, showing the Western Front as it was in December, 1914. The window, which is large and low, looks out upon a rambling garden growing vegetables. The window is a practical casement one, opening to the level of the seat beneath it. There is a catch on it, and two old faded white muslin curtains cover the two lower panes in each half of window. There are two doors to the room, the first L. up stage leading to the front passage of the house, and the second R. down stage, leading to the kitchen and out-houses, the latter of which has been converted by successive occupants into quarters for the Brigade Signallers and Orderlies. The window is in a recess R.C. of the back of the stage. There is an arched opening up stage on R. side with three steps leading to a built rostrum off stage, all covered with old faded carpet. These steps are flanked on up side by a sloping wooden banister "fence," and masked by a wooden fitment on down side. Behind this banister is a pedestal to carry a large lamp with globe. Between staircase and door on R. side is a French sideboard with a drawer in it containing a coloured tablecloth, and a lamp similar to the pedestal one is on it. (These lamps represent oil lamps.) A small 1-ft.-wide table is between window and door up

stage against the wall. On it is a stable lantern and MME. DENAUX's shawl. A three-peg roughly-made hat-rack is nailed on wall on return piece behind door up stage. An Army blanket covers the writing-desk, which is flat-topped with a knee-hole. On it are black deed boxes, a date calendar with metal frame, blotting-pad, ink, pens, wax, matches, a wicker letter basket, official papers bound with red tape, a plan of village on tracing paper for billeting purposes, and loose Army papers. A chair is behind desk. A small screen about 3ft. high by 2ft. 6in. wide rests against the edge of the fireplace opening up stage. The fireplace is a large open recess, backed with red bricks; the centre part shows the traces of smoke-blackening; there is an iron bracket in the centre of the back bricks, with a chain and hook supporting a cauldron over the fire. The fire is made of logs; at the opening of the play it should glow dimly. A roll of brown paper dipped in saltpetre and dried should be lighted before curtain rises to give smoke effect. This paper should be put in the logs out of sight of audience. When SYKES blows the fire it should glow more brightly (work with rod in battery), and when it is well alight put on red lime at side. A faded tapestried couch or Chesterfield settee, not high-backed, is down stage, L.C., opposite fire. Leave room between the fire-screen and desk to walk through. The two doors have common black latches, lift-up ones. Blue and white check French curtains to windows and valance of same material. Same material for valance to high mantelshelf of wood, on which are pewter plates and pots. Red-tiled floor cloth to cover stage. A thick layer of crisp gravel on path outside window, to "crunch" when walked on. White hearthstone, with extra piece of stone for logs to stand on.

When the curtain goes up CORPORAL SYKES is crouching on his knees by the fireplace blowing at the refractory embers with all his might.

GLENISTER and GRAHAM have had an early breakfast.

The GENERAL is not yet down.

JENKS' voice (off stage). Corp'rul! I say, Corp'rul!

SYKES (looking up with his face all over ashes and speaking irritably). Well, wot is it now?

JENKS (putting his head in the doorway R.). Them eggs 'as got trench feet or somethin'.

(Enter JENKS.)

SYKES (sharply). Bad?

JENKS (grinning). Well, you come an' 'ave a smell.

SYKES. Now, none o' your lip, me lad.

JENKS. Orl rite, Corp'rul. Well, wot's old Rooty-Tooty to 'ave for breakfast?

SYKES (aghast, rises and comes L.C.). Ain't there a good one in the 'ole lot?

JENKS (shuts door and comes R.C.). Well, I've broken a dozen, an' it's worse'n a gas attack.

SYKES (*shaking his head*). There'll be 'ell to pay over this. 'E'll 'ave to put up with 'am, I suppose. Funny all them eggs bein' crook. The Capt'in didn't complain, did 'e?

JENKS. Well, I scrambled 'is for 'im. (*Going to able R. side*.) 'E ain't eaten very much, I see.

SYKES (*reprovingly, at L. side of table*). You didn't ought to 'ave done that, Jenks. The Captain's very particular about 'is breakfast.

JENKS. Yes, Corp'ul. (*With a knowing grin*.) 'Ave you seen the ole gal's dorter from Paris?

SYKES (*nervously*). This ain't a time for talking about dorters. The General's liver this morning is something fierce. 'E nearly bit my head off when I took up 'is tea—and the way 'e's going to perform when 'e finds there's no eggs! (*Sits on chair L. of table*.)

JENKS (*resentfully*). Well, darn it all, Corp'ul, 'e don't hexpect a bloke to lay the blinkin' things 'isself, does 'e?

SYKES (*sharply*). Now, no sauce from you, me lad, if *you* please. You know as well as I do that there's no excuses in the Army. DISSIPLINE, Jenks, DISIPLINE.

JENKS (*sarcastically*). Yus, an' 'ow are you going to make fresh eggs of dissipline, I'd like ter know.

SYKES. That's *your* business. There was never any difficulty about the heggs w'en we was 'ere five months back.

JENKS. Well, I done *my* best. The blessed fowls ain't layin', I suppose. (*Inquisitively*.) What's wrong with ole Rooty-Tooty, did you say, Corp'ul?

SYKES (*heavily*). Nothing by that name, me lad. You speak proper when you speak of Generals.

JENKS (*mock loftily*). Oh, orl rite, Corp'ul. Then what is the mattah with the Brigadeah! (*Dips his legs and plays with an imaginary moustache*.)

SYKES (*ignoring his tone*). 'E's got the needle a bit worse than usual—that's all. 'Is room don't seem very comfortable. I think it leaked in the night. (*Seriously—arms on table*.) By the way, Jenks, 'ave you *noticed* anything since we came back 'ere?

JENKS (*grinning amorously*). Only the ole gal's new dorter.

SYKES (*in a superior tone*). You would notice that. That's just new Army all over. Anything fluffy an' over you goes!

JENKS (*good humouredly*). Orl rite, old blunderbuss. We ain't all out of the Ark. An' wot 'ave *you* noticed?

SYKES. Just the General's room, that's all.

JENKS. Wot about it?

SYKES (*mysteriously*). Oh, nothing!

JENKS (*dryly*). Well, o' course that tells me a lot, don't it? (*Goes slightly R.C. down stage*.)

SYKES (*significantly*). If you 'ad a 'ead on your shoulders, me lad, it 'ud tell yer a *mighty* lot. Now then!

JENKS (*jerking his head in the direction of the kitchen*). Somethin' about 'er? (*Returning to SYKES*.)

SYKES. Mebbe!

JENKS. Somethin' I don't know already?

SYKES (*inquisitively*). Wot *do* you know already?

JENKS. I know this, that she's goin' to make a set at the Captain.

SYKES. Captain Glenister? (*Rise.*)

JENKS. She is. She comes into the kitchen this morning smiling as pretty as a picture, an' asks me where Mosso lee Captayne?

SYKES. Bloomin' sauce! Well, I never! (*To L.*)

JENKS (*ironically*). Why, Corp'rul, I should 'ave thought with a 'eadpiece like yours, you'd 'ave jumped to it long ago.

SYKES (*sharply*). I'll tell you one thing, me lad, if I 'ave any more lip from you, you'll jump to it good and smart, you will! (*Pointing authoritatively to kitchen door.*) You get along, and 'ave a look at the breakfas'.

JENKS. Breakfast! There ain't no other breakfast but wot there is 'ere. (*Pointing to table.*)

SYKES (*in a parade-ground voice*). Well, you make some more, then.

(JENKS *about to speak.*)

Don't stand there arguin' with me, me lad. Shift yourself, now.

(JENKS *turns and goes off door R. huffily, closing it after him.*)

(NOTE:—Every time JENKS makes an exit he gets to other side of door, faces it, backs down the passage, and draws the door to him till it closes.)

(Exit JENKS.)

(SYKES *growls at the closed door and then goes back to blowing up the fire.*)

(After a short pause enter DOROTHY R. rather nervously. She comes downstairs and down stage and stops at the sight of SYKES blowing up the fire, and gets down R.)

DOROTHY (*tentatively*). Bon jour, mon Caporal!

(SYKES *looks up, rises and faces her, and is torn between admiration for her beauty and faith to the tradition of discipline. He points his thumbs upwards to express approval of her.*)

SYKES. You can't come in 'ere, Miss. No bon. (*Comes c.*)

(He goes to door R. leading into kitchen and opens it for her. DOROTHY crosses to L.C.)

DOROTHY (*raising her hand*). 'Ush! Do not make a noise. (*Pointing.*) Fermez-le. Shot it!

(SYKES *reluctantly obeys, remaining by door.*)

I come in 'ere to see you for a mineet.

SYKES (*grinning at the implied compliment*). To see me? Wee, wee. Tray bonn! (*Advancing towards her*.) Jay parl froncay un poo.

(*Both c.*)

DOROTHY (*L. of him. Smiling*). Oui, comme une vache espagnole! (*Turns, goes L.C.*)

(*Turns L.C.*)

SYKES (*pausing*). What's that about a spaniel? (*Follows her.*)

DOROTHY (*turns to him*). No, no. Eet ees to say zat you spik vair good Frainch.

SYKES (*by R. end of table, foot; overcome*). Oh non, mamerselle—tray poo—tray poo.

DOROTHY. All raight! We will talk in Ainglesh zen.

(*Both c.*)

SYKES. Well, it might be a bit quicker, perhaps.

DOROTHY. Oui. (*Seductively*.) I want you to do somsing for me.

SYKES. Out with it.

DOROTHY. Tell me first, where ees Monsieur le Capitaine?

SYKES. Well, I arsk you! Of all the bloomin' sauce!

DOROTHY (*persisting*). Where is 'e? Eet is important I should spik—

SYKES (*severely*). Do you mean Captain Glenister, Miss?

DOROTHY. Mais oui, mon Caporal. (*Clasping her hands.*) Oh, tell me where he is.

SYKES (*still severe*). Well, miss, you'll hexcuse me, I'm sure, but wot's that got ter do with you?

DOROTHY. I want to see him.

SYKES (*suspiciously*). To make a complaint? Now, yer ain't got nothing to complain of, Miss. Why—

DOROTHY (*interrupting, with a stamp of her foot*). Oh! You are stupide! I don't want to make a complaint. I want to see him. (*Wheedlingly.*) He ees a vairee great friend of mine.

SYKES (*in a tone of cold disapproval*). That's impossible, miss. The Captain's a married man.

DOROTHY (*persuasively*). What of zat? Ees it not possible for him to have friends?

(*SYKES looks eloquently away from her, and gets nearer door R. Turns L.C.*)

Where is he now? (*Follows him a little.*)

SYKES. I don't know, miss, I'm sure. (*He opens the door again, which stays open.*)

DOROTHY. Will he come back this morning? (*Irritably.*) Oh, shut zat silly door!

SYKES (*advances R.C.*). You'll 'ave to go, I'm afraid, miss. Ladies is not allowed in an officers' mess.

(DOROTHY *crosses SYKES briskly as if to go, then turns and closes door, standing in front of it with her back against it. SYKES gives back a pace.*)

DOROTHY. Will M'sieur le Capitaine be back zis morning? (*Pleadingly.*) Tell me, mon Caporal?

SYKES (*prosaically*). If the General comes in and catches you 'ere, miss, 'e'll give me the sack right orf. 'E's fearful strict.

DOROTHY (*comes nearer him*). Well, tell me zen where is le Capitaine?

SYKES (*glaring*). Certainly not.

DOROTHY (*significantly*). All right. Zen ze General catch me 'ere. (*Turns up stage towards window.*)

SYKES (*aghast, moving up towards her, keeping R. side of table*). You little 'ussy! I'll tell your mother of you. (*Shouts across table.*) 'Ere, Maderme—Maderme.

MME. DENAUX (*off*). Qu'est-ce que c'est, donc?

DOROTHY (*rushes down between SYKES and door and partly opens it. Calling off through door down R.*). Ce n'est rien, maman! Ne t'en occupe pas.

MME. DENAUX. Bien! Bien!

(DOROTHY *shuts door.*)

SYKES (*comes down L. of her, overpowered at her cheek*). 'Ere, Miss, now wot's the game?

DOROTHY (*opening her bag as she talks, showing a ten-shilling note in her hand*). Let us understand one anozer, mon Caporal.

SYKES (*fascinated by the sight*). Oh, by all means, miss. Let's come to an understanding.

DOROTHY. Zis is for you. (*Comes C.*)

SYKES. For me. Ten bob? Wot for?

DOROTHY. Eef you will do somesing for me.

(SYKES *reaches out to take note—which should be a RED English ten-shilling note—passes his hand over the note, restraining himself from clutching it and rubs his chin thoughtfully—action to be smartly done.*)

SYKES (*suspiciously, but still keeping an eye on the bribe*). What?

DOROTHY. It ees for you eef you keep watch and announce me to le Capitaine Glenister as soon as ze coast is clear. I must see 'im alone.

SYKES. Must see him alone. (*To L. suspiciously, swings round.*) Look 'ere, you ain't goin' to dot 'im one. 'E ain't done the dirty on you, 'as he?

DOROTHY (*gets C.*). Why, he is my very best friend.

SYKES (*vulgarly*). Come orf!

DOROTHY (*sharply*). Do not be impertinent, mon caporal, or I take back ze offer. You forget yourself. (*Turns away R.*)

SYKES (*comes close to her, L. side, sobered at the thought of losing his ten shillings*). Right y'are, miss. No offence. (*Recapitulating.*) Now all you wants is for me to show you in to the Capt'in when 'e's alone and keep guard while you're talkin' to 'im. Fer that I gets ten bob.

DOROTHY (*nodding*). Oui, mon Caporal. (*Backs to c.*)

SYKES (*holding out his hand*). Orl rite. Bung it over.

(*She gives it to him.*)

It's a deal.

DOROTHY (*with a sigh of relief*). Oh, sank you, mon Caporal.

SYKES (*very frankly*). Mind! You gotter look out. I tell you straight the General's a fair terror, and if 'e was to catch you an' the Capt'in alone—— (*Throws up his hands at the thought.*)

DOROTHY (*teasing him*). Well, ouat would 'e do?

SYKES (*puzzled how to put it*). Well, 'e'd fair twist your tail, miss, I promise you that—and as for the Capt'in—— (*Goes L.*)

DOROTHY (*anxiously*). What would 'appen to 'im?

SYKES (*soberly*). 'E'd get it fair in the neck. (*He is about to pocket the note, hesitates, flips it on his hand, then he returns to her L. Almost harshly.*) Now, understand, miss, if you ain't goin' to play the game, the deal's off, and you can 'ave your ten bob back. (*He holds it out to her.*)

(*She smiles.*)

Straight! I mean it. I ain't goin' to be no party to makin' trouble for an officer like Captain Glenister.

DOROTHY (*puts her hand on his outstretched arm*). Mon Caporal, I like you. You will not—how do you say—"let down" your Capitaine. (*In the doorway.*) Nor will I. (*Goes to door.*) You shall see. (*Opens it.*) I, too, can play ze game.

(*Exit to kitchen.*)

(*SYKES stares off after her.*)

SYKES (*looking at note in his hand*). Ten bloomin' bob. (*Very puzzled.*) English too. (*His eye catches the fire-grate with the fire nearly out.*) Oh, drat this 'ere fire. (*Goes to it and commences blowing it up again.*)

(*He sings between puffs at the fire, "Keep the Home Fires Burning."*
The fire glows when he blows on it. Slight pause.)

(*Enter GLENISTER L. up stage. GLENISTER carries official papers. He hangs his hat on the pegs behind the door, puts some papers on the desk, comes down to foot of table L. side, puts a paper on the table at the bottom end of it, and begins to take off his gloves; his cane is under his left arm.*)

(*SYKES rises, and comes to attention.*)

SYKES. Was your breakfast all right, sir ?

GLENISTER (*absently*). I think so. Why ?

SYKES. The heggs was a little bit—er—wasn't they, sir ?

GLENISTER. I dare say. I didn't notice. I've been too busy to eat much. (*Goes up towards window.*) (*A little apprehensively.*) There's a lot for the General, too, this morning—(*points to papers on desk*)—a—how is he—do you know ? (*Goes up to window and puts his gloves on seat.*)

(SYKES gets plates, etc., cross to R.)

SYKES (*warningly*). I think perhaps 'e may not 'ave slept very well, sir.

GLENISTER (*understandingly*). Oh, he's a little——? (*Comes to L. of table, sits.*)

SYKES (*removing plate from in front of GLENISTER*). Exactly, sir.

GLENISTER. No sign of him yet, I suppose. (*Picks up paper he put on table.*)

SYKES. Not yet, sir. (*Moves towards door R. with plates.*)

(*Slight scuffle off R. from landing. Noise of cackling fowls. Root's voice off on landing.*)

ROOT (*furiously*). Get out of the way. Shoo ! Shoo !

SYKES (*smoothly, looking in direction of stairs*). That would be him, now, sir.

(*Exit R. with plates.*)

(*Immediately after, enter ROOT from stairs R., fully dressed except for spurs. He wears no Sam Browne belt. He is a very choleric man of about 55 ; overhanging eyebrows, bristling white moustache ; regular soldier of 35 years' service, a great deal in India. Very good-hearted and jolly enough when things are going well, but an iron disciplinarian, and, although very well liked by his staff (particularly the Brigade Major), not a little feared, especially in the morning.*)

(GLENISTER goes on reading.)

ROOT (*addressing the world at large*). Infernal house is simply swarming with poultry, all getting in your way. (*Regarding the ham with aversion.*) No eggs, of course. (*Grumbling to himself.*) Plenty of fowls.

GLENISTER (*after this outburst had died down*). Morning, General.

ROOT (*liverishly*). Morning. (*Sits in arm-chair at head of table. In an aggrieved growl.*) Who on earth billeted us here ? (*Pouring out coffee.*)

GLENISTER. It's the regular place. Every one else comes here !

ROOT (*cavernously*). Oh, blast every one else. Who did the billeting yesterday, Graham or Marnier ?

GLENISTER (*retiring to his paper again*). Don't know.

(GENERAL grunts.)

(*A thought striking him, he looks up.*) Why? Is anything the matter with your room?

ROOT (*looks at him suspiciously*). Is anything the matter with yours?

GLENISTER. Well, I'm in a little crib about a hundred yards down the street. It's all right, though.

ROOT (*bitterly*). That's a comfort. And I've no doubt the others are in nice little cribs, too. (*Prepares to carve ham.*)

GLENISTER (*sympathetically*). What's the matter with yours, sir?

ROOT (*ironically*). Matter? Nothing. Couldn't be nicer. Large airy room with a piece chopped out of the roof for extra ventilation; bed exactly under it, so as not to miss any of the drippings; poultry in a pigeon loft on one side; and a child in the next room that bellows all night just in case you should forget yourself and try to go to sleep. (*Begins to cut viciously at the ham—muttering. He slices with ham in sympathetic movement with each word, thus:*) Never (*slice*) slept (*slice*) like it (*slice*) before in my life (*he piles the ham on his plate*). Height of comfort! (*Stabs fork upright into ham.*) Simply marvellous! (*Stabs knife upright into ham.*)

GLENISTER (*apologetically*). Well, General, you know you always insist on living at the mess.

ROOT (*savagely*). Of course, it's entirely my fault. I'm so cursed hard to please. (*Draws out fork and lays it down.*) I'm not satisfied with a mere bedroom. I always want a roof-garden (*draws out knife and puts it beside fork*), don't I? (*Bitterly.*)

(*Enter GRAHAM L. up stage. He removes his hat, carries it, and comes down R. of table.*)

You might tell Graham that the next time he'd better billet me in the pigsty and be done with it. (*Drinks coffee.*)

GRAHAM (*who had intended to be hearty, but seeing how the wind lies, changes his mind and becomes demure*). Good morning, sir.

(*The GENERAL is drinking and has not noticed his presence. He half chokes, puts down his coffee cup with a splutter, and looks at GRAHAM.*)

I'm afraid——

ROOT (*with a formidable stare*). Oh, there you are. And of what are you afraid?

GRAHAM (*soothingly*). I'm afraid, sir, your room wasn't all that could be desired last night.

ROOT (*grimly*). You still have some doubt on the subject, then?

GRAHAM (*in confusion*). Well—er——

ROOT. Because if you've any doubt about it, I can soon set your mind at rest.

(*GLENISTER rises, goes to desk and looks through papers there.*)

GRAHAM (*apologetically*). Well, sir, I know it was a bad room.

ROOT (*seizing his opportunity—his voice rising with rage*). You know it was a bad room! (*Furiously.*) Then what the devil do you mean, you damned young oaf, by putting me in it? I'll sack you from the Brigade if you dare to do anything like that again.

(GLENISTER goes to map between door and window, and, consulting a paper in his hand, alters the position of the string on it, to mark an altered position of the British line. He then returns to desk and sits.)

You take jolly good care to get a comfortable place for your own carcass, and you have the impertinence to poke me away in a cavern of an attic, among the swallows' nests and rats, with a great gap in the roof, and a shrieking baby next door. (*Witheringly.*) And then you're afraid it's not a very good room. The discipline of this Brigade is simply going to hell! (*Turns from GRAHAM in a fury, puts his right elbow in the butter, smooths his hair with his right hand, and stares at GLENISTER.*)

GLENISTER (*to give GRAHAM time to recover from this outburst*). Wait a minute, General, perhaps there's an explanation.

ROOT (*with symptoms of getting angry again*). Explanation—
explanation be damned. The whole thing—

GRAHAM. Excuse me, sir, your elbow's in the butter.

ROOT (*with a roar*). WHAT! (*Draws out his handkerchief from his sleeve and wipes off the butter; he calms down a bit.*) Well, Graham, what is your explanation?

GRAHAM. Well, sir, it's like this. We got in awfully late yesterday afternoon, as you know; and when I got here I found that the Brigadier's usual room was occupied. That one you're in, sir, is not the Brigadier's usual room.

ROOT (*dryly*). I'm just beginning to guess that for myself.

GRAHAM. Y—yes, sir. Well, when I made inquiries, I found that Madame's youngest daughter, who is, I believe, a rather well-known singer in Paris—so Marnier explained, anyhow—had come on a flying visit to her mother the day before yesterday; and as the last Brigade left here over a week ago, and she had no news of anyone coming, she naturally put her daughter in the Brigadier's room, in preference to the one under the roof.

ROOT (*even more dryly*). Yes, I can quite understand that!

GRAHAM. Yes, sir. Well, yesterday afternoon, before we came, the daughter was seized with a bad bilious attack or something, and went to bed early. Now the question was, could I turn a sick woman out just for the one night—I knew we could make arrangements next day—and I thought you wouldn't like to do that, sir; so I looked at the other room, and as it had a good big comfortable bed—I'm afraid I didn't notice the hole in the roof, sir—

ROOT. No, you have to occupy the bed—on a wet night—to become really sensible of it.

GRAHAM. So I put *you* in there—

(*The GENERAL looks up sharply; GRAHAM hastens to explain.*)

--for the night, intending to explain when you came in. Then I had to go urgently to the Battalion at Laurette; and didn't get back till you'd already gone to bed. So I presumed it was all right.

ROOT (*sarcastically*). And you propose, I take it, that I should continue to occupy my nest in the rafters, whilst your friend from Paris languishes in my bedroom, and you and Glenister are snugly tucked up in your "little cribs a hundred yards down the street."

GRAHAM. Oh, of course to-day, sir, we'll arrange for the girl to move.

ROOT (*grumbling*). She won't do her bilious attack much good in that horrible den on the roof. . . . Why on earth when these women have got their confounded girls out of the way, don't they keep them out of the way?

GRAHAM (*observing by the symptoms that the GENERAL is getting in a better temper*). She's rather nice, as a matter of fact, sir. Pretty and all that.

ROOT (*interrupting*). What d'you mean, you young dog—"rather nice—pretty and all that"? I thought she was shut up in my bedroom (*pauses*) with a bilious attack.

GRAHAM (*cornered*). Well, of course, I—er—I had to make sure, you know.

ROOT (*mercilessly*). Had to make sure of what? That she had a bilious attack—or that she was in my room—or that she was in bed—or what?

GRAHAM (*shifting his feet about nervously*). Well, er—all that sort of thing, don't you know.

ROOT. Well, I suppose you satisfied yourself?

GRAHAM (*airily*). Oh yes. I'm sure she's quite all right, sir.

ROOT (*dryly*). That's a blessing. (*Realizing that GRAHAM has been standing all the time.*) Have you had breakfast yet?

GRAHAM. Oh yes, thank you, sir. Some time ago.

(GLENISTER comes to table L. side and sits, comparing a paper he has brought from the desk with the one he left on the table, and becoming wholly absorbed in his study of it.)

(Determined to settle the question of the room while the GENERAL is in a good temper.) About your room, sir—we'll get Mademoiselle moved this morning.

ROOT (*who in spite of his discomfort loathes the idea of inconveniencing a woman*). If only you could get a tarpaulin rigged across the roof; and have my bed moved a bit; and hire a couple of assassins to deal with the child—I'd be all right where I am.

GRAHAM (*intent upon a settlement*). It'd be far more comfortable for you to turn the girl out and take your proper room.

ROOT (*almost hotly*). You may not believe it, Graham, but I am extremely reluctant to turn the girl out. (*The GENERAL begins the following remark with very quiet tones, and gradually increases to fortissimo, as GLENISTER takes no notice of him.*) If you can

disengage yourself from your papers for a moment, would you kindly pass me the marmalade, Glenister.

GLENISTER (*absently*). Certainly, certainly. (*He does so.*)

ROOT (*taking it*). No. I don't want to turn the poor girl out. (*He puts some on his plate.*) You'd better get the pioneers to work making the attic a little more habitable. We can discuss who's going to occupy it when that's been done.

(*Enter SYKES R. door. He goes to sideboard.*)

GRAHAM. Very good, sir. I'll see to it at once. (*Puts his hat on, salutes, and turns up towards stairs.*)

(*GRAHAM calls SYKES, and explains to him, in dumb show, that he wants SYKES to get a roll of tarpaulin to cover the GENERAL'S roof. SYKES says "Very good, sir," and goes off R. GRAHAM goes up the stairs.*)

GLENISTER. Er—General, will you read these before you inspect the Battalions or afterwards?

ROOT. Oh, afterwards.

(*GLENISTER takes papers to desk.*)

Where's the billeting plan of the district?

GLENISTER (*handing over*). Here it is. (*Gets it off table and gives it.*) What time do you want your horse?

ROOT. In about half an hour. (*Rising.*) I'll be back in about half an hour.

(*He goes out, upstairs, jauntily, GLENISTER settles down to work at the desk.*)

(*Presently SYKES appears at doorway R., with a slight smile on his face; he looks at GLENISTER, clears his throat and half closes the door.*)

SYKES. Sir.

(*DOROTHY is seen looking behind the door.*)

GLENISTER (*without looking up*). Yes, what is it, Corporal Sykes?

SYKES. This 'ere Madmosel Juliet wants to speak to you, sir.

GLENISTER. Mademoiselle Juliette? Who's she?

SYKES. The young lady of the 'ouse, sir.

GLENISTER (*still without looking up*). Tell the young lady of the house to buzz off. Say, no bon; nah poo! She'll understand. (*Goes on writing.*)

(*SYKES smiles nervously, and a voice replying outside causes GLENISTER to bound out of his chair.*)

VOICE. Do you really want me to buzz off, Harry?

GLENISTER (*springing up, incredulously*). What's that? Who on earth's that?

(*He rushes L.C. The door is pushed open from without, and DOROTHY dressed in smart French clothes, rushes to R.*)

Dorothy, my darling girl, how in the world have you come here?

(*They embrace, and ask each other questions, talking together; then they suddenly remember SYKES' presence and in confusion release each other.*)

Corporal Sykes, you might—er—see that no one comes in for a few minutes.

SYKES (*demurely*). That is, understood, sir. The lady is seeing you about the General's room.

(*Exit R.*)

GLENISTER (*as soon as the door closes*). Dorothy!

DOROTHY (*they embrace again*). Darling!

GLENISTER. And now, Mrs. Glenister (*shakes his finger at her*), will you be good enough to tell your husband (*folding his arms*) how—on—earth—you managed it? (*Holding out his hands in welcome.*)

DOROTHY. Oh, Harry, isn't it heavenly. (*Taking them affectionately.*) Well, I'll tell you. I got to Paris three nights ago, just in time to get your letter saying that you couldn't get away after all for the present, and, my dear, I simply howled like a kid.

(*He consoles her.*)

And then I began to think. I knew you were bound to be somewhere down here, from what you told me last time you were at home. So I just got some very nice French clothes—they are nice, aren't they? (*Steps back a pace.*)

GLENISTER (*absently*). Yes—charming.

DOROTHY. Well—then I went to the station and took a ticket to Amiens and came on straight to this village—trusting to luck you'd come out for your rest to the same place you went to last time. This was two days ago. Then I found the Brigade Billet and interviewed Madame.

(*Takes his arm and leads him down L.C. near couch, GLENISTER L. of her.*)

You see I knew all about her from what you had told me previously—and I spent a perfectly enormous sum of money in persuading her to adopt me as her daughter for a few days. And here I am.

GLENISTER. So I see. (*Dubiously.*) There'll be the father and mother of a row if you're caught.

DOROTHY (*plaintively*). Harry darling, you're not to scold me.

GLENISTER (*hastily*). No, of course not. Only—— (*Pause.*)

DOROTHY (*anxiously*). Only what? Are you angry with me?

GLENISTER (*caught between the official point of view and his affection for his wife*). I'm not in the least angry.

(*He goes behind couch and sits on back of it, holding out his hand to DOROTHY, who goes to him and sits on R. side of couch.*)

I'm only trying to think out what's the right thing to do. (*Smiling propitiatingly.*) You see, it's not quite usual for officers' wives to turn up, so to speak, in the front line. In fact there's a regulation against it.

DOROTHY (*offended*). Oh, if you don't want me, I'd better go back at once. (*Rises.*)

GLENISTER (*starting forward, and getting in front of her R. side*). Here, I say, you can't go off like that.

DOROTHY (*tremulously*). Well, you don't seem to want me very much. (*Turns to L. end of couch.*)

GLENISTER (*keeping near her*). Don't be silly, you know I want you to stay.

DOROTHY (*dubiously*). Well, it doesn't seem much like it.

GLENISTER (*desperately*). Can't you see, my dear old girl, that from a soldier's point of view you've done something fearfully improper.

DOROTHY. But nobody will ever find out.

GLENISTER (*shaking his head*). Well, I wouldn't bank on that if I were you. (*Half laughing.*) However, here you are—and——

DOROTHY (*roguishly*). And you can't get rid of me. (*Sits on couch—impulsively offering her hand.*)

(*GLENISTER takes it, and he sits on R. side of couch. She is on L. side.*)

Harry, am I a frightful nuisance?

GLENISTER (*grinning*). Well, officially speaking you are, you know.

(*She half rises.*)

(*Putting his hands on her shoulders.*) But from a personal point of view——

(*She sits again. Pauses.*)

DOROTHY. Dear old goose. (*Pause.*) Then you are not going to send me back?

GLENISTER (*wavering*). Well——

DOROTHY. Oh, Harry——

GLENISTER. Oh, dash it all, no. We'll risk it.

DOROTHY (*in high glee*). How perfectly topping of you

GLENISTER (*gratified*). You're pleased?

DOROTHY. *Rather!*

GLENISTER. Well, that's all right then. (*He takes her right hand in his left and raises it up and down, and both sigh happily. Then his fears return and he becomes serious.*) Now, listen. If anything is suspected by the General, there'll be the very deuce to pay. You've let us in for it now and you've got to play the part properly.

DOROTHY (*scornfully*). Of course.

GLENISTER (*gravely*). It's all very well to say of course, but—my God, Dorothy, if you let us down we shall be absolutely in the soup. There are some Generals—— (*Slight pause.*)

DOROTHY. Yes. Go on.

GLENISTER. Well, I was going to say there were some Generals who wouldn't really mind—but of course they'd have to. It's an Army Order.

DOROTHY. What is, Harry?

GLENISTER (*clearly and incisively*). Forbidding wives to be in the same area as their husbands.

DOROTHY (*lightly*). Oh, that!

GLENISTER (*soberly*). You take it very lightly, old girl.

DOROTHY. Well, it's such rot, isn't it?

GLENISTER. H'm. Well, it may be, but the point is it's an order, and if you knew old Root, you'd appreciate my misgivings. He's a perfect terror.

DOROTHY (*firmly*). My dear boy, "Old Root" doesn't enter into the matter at all. My name for the present is Juliette Denaux. I'm the old thing's step-daughter, I have a small part in the opera, and rather fancy myself as a soprano. I'm down here for a few days to rest my voice. If I should happen to go back to Paris at the same time as you go on leave, who's going to think twice about it? Not old Root, anyhow.

GLENISTER (*shuddering at the thought*). I devoutly hope not.

DOROTHY (*scornfully*). Of course if you're afraid—— (*Turns away.*)

GLENISTER. That's hardly fair, old girl. (*Rises, strolls down R.C. thoughtfully.*) I'm only trying to make sure that everything goes all right. (*Dubiously—turns to her.*) I suppose you can talk broken French well enough to pass?

DOROTHY (*dropping into broken French*). I 'ope so, 'Arree. (*Rises.*) Yais mai little Capitaine, I 'ope so for both our sake. (*Cross c.—tantalizingly.*) Do you laiike your Frainch wife, 'Arree! Is she vairee chic? (*Pirouettes round, stands back to audience, hands on hips.*)

GLENISTER (*grinning in spite of himself*). Hum!

DOROTHY (*comes to him, still teasing him*). I 'af not live in France all my enfance for nosing, mon petit chou! I 'af not a Frainch grandmère wiz whom I spend all my vacances for nosing. Es-tu content de me voir, 'Arree? Dis donc, mon ami! (*She ruffles his moustache.*) Now tell me, 'Arree, do mai accent—how you say—pass ze mustard?

GLENISTER (*laughing*). It sounds all right.

DOROTHY (*scornfully*). Of course it's all right. And I don't suppose your old Root knows any more French than that nice Corporal of yours. (*Turns to L.*)

GLENISTER. The General can't speak a word of French.

DOROTHY (*swings round*). There you are! Simple as pie!
(*Comes L.C.*)

GLENISTER (*dubiously*). Well, I hope it'll be as easy as you think.
(*Pause. Takes her hand under his left arm and pats it with his right.*)
Er—one other thing. I don't want you to think me jealous, or any of that rot——

DOROTHY (*interrupting*). Of course not, dearest.

GLENISTER. Only that young officer you saw yesterday——

DOROTHY (*mystified*). Young officer?

GLENISTER. Yes—er—the one who came into your—er—into the General's—er—into the bedroom yesterday.

DOROTHY. Oh, the boy who came to do the billeting?

GLENISTER. That's the chap. Well, I'd avoid him if I were you. He thinks himself a bit of a lad with the girls—I don't think I'd give him a chance of talking to you.

DOROTHY (*laughing and backing away to L.C.*). Harry dear, what do you take me for?

GLENISTER (*gravely*). It's all very well to laugh, but you're going to find it harder than you think to play the part of a smart French girl without—er—without people making advances. Graham is no end of a lad, I warn you.

DOROTHY. I'll look out, old boy.

(GLENISTER *smiles and walks from C. to R.C. without a word, looks at stairs, becomes grave, and turns to DOROTHY.*)

GLENISTER (*doubtfully*). The General is a bit of a goer himself, I believe.

DOROTHY (*reassuringly*). I'll take care of myself, darling.

GLENISTER (*more cheerfully*). Right-o!

(*He offers his hand, DOROTHY runs to him and he leads her towards stairs.*)

I expect you'll be all right. Now I'm afraid you'll have to hop it.

DOROTHY (*regretfully*). Must I?

GLENISTER. Yes, otherwise some one will smell a rat.

DOROTHY. When shall I see you again?

GLENISTER. Not to-day. I shall be frightfully busy. To-night—do you see this window? (*Pointing to the French window to garden and going to it with her.*)

DOROTHY. Yes.

GLENISTER. I'll come back here after the others have gone to bed and wait out there. As soon as all is clear inside come down and let me in. (*Shows her how the catch is worked.*) Do you quite understand?

DOROTHY. Yes, that'll do nicely.

(*They get to foot of stairs.*)

(Putting her hands on his shoulders.) You dear old thing, it's too ripping to see you again. (On stairs, 1st step.)

GLENISTER (putting his arms round her waist). I'm awfully glad you've come.

DOROTHY (roguishly). Do you love me?

GLENISTER (soberly). I worship you. (Bends and kisses her.) Good-bye till to-night.

DOROTHY. Good-bye. (They kiss.)

(Enter MARNIER. DOROTHY sees him and runs off. MARNIER, who has entered the room briskly and is well inside, sees them embracing, he does not stop his walking, but turns smartly on his heel and tries to steal off. GLENISTER sees him, and calls "Marnier!" MARNIER stops, turns slowly, they face each other, and solemnly walk three steps down stage in silence. They stare at each other awkwardly; then MARNIER tries to pass it off as a jest.)

MARNIER (peeping at staircase). Zat ees ze daughter of Madame, no? Ouat a beauty.

GLENISTER. That's her.

MARNIER (knowingly—nudges him). Ouat ees she doing here? Aha, mon Capitaine. (Shakes finger at him playfully.)

GLENISTER (coldly). She's been here about the General's room. (Pause.) Why? (Loudly, like a bark.)

MARNIER (backing out). I sought you 'ad—'ow you say?—"clickt!" I see I was mistake. (Gets nearer desk.)

GLENISTER (advancing grimly). You were. And talking about mistakes, you'd better fight shy of the General this morning, after the bedroom you got for him yesterday

MARNIER (indignantly). I told Meestair Graham—

GLENISTER (cutting him short). It's no good making excuses. The General was simply furious, and I don't wonder. You and Graham are a pair. (Crosses in front of MARNIER and gets behind desk.) You let yourselves be talked round by any pretty girl you meet.

MARNIER. I assure you, sare—

GLENISTER. It's no good assuring me anything. Now take my advice. Leave that girl alone.

MARNIER (throwing out his hands in protestation). I haf nevaire even speak to her—

GLENISTER (emphasizing what he says with a blow on the desk). Well, don't start. (In a more conciliatory tone.) I'm only speaking for your own good.

(Enter GRAHAM from stairs, rubbing his hands and looking very pleased with himself. He gets down R.)

The General is awfully particular, and he'd be extremely annoyed if a member of his staff—

MARNIER (overpowered at this attack). But my dear Capitaine—

GRAHAM (*interrupting*). Stolen a march on you this time, Glenny my son.

GLENISTER. Oh! how's that?

GRAHAM (*in high glee*). Ha, ha, me lad! (*Bends his first finger at him, goes to foot of stairs and looks up.*) Just seen the little daughter from Paris. (*Comes down R.*) Hell of a glad eye.

(MARNIER *smothers a guffaw.*)

GLENISTER (*sharply*). Oh, Marnier, I want you to——

MARNIER (*in high dudgeon*). I understand, mon Capitaine. You do not desire I shall hear ze misdoings of ze General's staff.

(*He stalks out angrily, and shuts the door.*)

GRAHAM. What's up with Marnier? (*Comes to head of table R.*)

GLENISTER (*exasperated, advancing to head of table L. side*). I've just been warning him to let that girl alone, and now you——

GRAHAM (*in astonishment*). Let her alone? My dear chap, have you seen her?

GLENISTER (*sarcastically*). Much as it may astonish you, Graham, I have. As a matter of fact she came in here to see me.

GRAHAM (*boisterously*). Came in to see you? (*Laughs and goes down R.*) You naughty old man—— (*Laughs.*) I thought you were married. (*Gets to head of arm-chair.*)

(GLENISTER *goes behind desk in dudgeon at "You naughty old man."*)

GLENISTER (*icily*). What's that got to do with it?

GRAHAM (*in a detached tone*). Oh, nothing. Nothing whatever. It's entirely your own affair.

GLENISTER (*with some warmth*). Not to satisfy your curiosity but simply to protect the poor girl from your beastly insinuations, I'll tell you that she came in on business.

GRAHAM (*hurriedly*). Of course.

GLENISTER (*continuing*). On business—about that infernal room of the General's.

GRAHAM (*as before*). Of course—of course. (*Comes down R.*)

GLENISTER (*furiously*). What do you mean, "Of course, of course"?

GRAHAM (*taken aback*). N—nothing. Nothing whatever.

GLENISTER (*in a towering rage*). Well, I wish to God you'd find something to do and let me do my work in peace. (*Snatches up his hat and bounces out of the room.*)

(GRAHAM *stares after him in surprise, then whistles an air, keeping time with it as he marches across the stage to couch, where he sits stretching his legs out in front of him, and closing his eyes.*)

(*Enter GENERAL from staircase.*)

(GRAHAM, who does not hear him come in, continues to lie back with his eyes closed. GENERAL comes R., stands, hands behind back, facing GRAHAM.)

ROOT (*raspingly*). Have a cigar and put your feet up, won't you?

GRAHAM (*springing up to attention*). Sorry, sir. I didn't see you. (*He stands at L. end of couch.*)

ROOT. Go on—don't mind me. Dream your dream out. The Brigade can wait. (*Comes L.C.*)

(*Enter SYKES through door R. with tarpaulin and goes up stairs.*)

GRAHAM. Er—about your room, sir.

ROOT. Well?

GRAHAM. I thought perhaps you'd like me to go and see if Made moiselle is ready to move.

ROOT (*slowly*). You thought perhaps I'd like you—— Now I wonder what put that idea into your head? Haven't I told you only a few minutes ago that I don't want her to shift?

GRAHAM (*eagerly*). Yes, sir, but I thought if one of us were to see her——

ROOT. Oh, that's what you're after. You want to see her.

GRAHAM (*protesting*). Oh no, sir. I don't want to see her in the least.

ROOT. Then you want *me* to see her?

GRAHAM (*sheepishly*). Er—no, sir.

ROOT (*in a tone of perplexity*). Well, dash me if I can understand what you're driving at. You suggest one of us should see her. You don't want to see her yourself, and you don't want me to see her. Now what *do* you want?

(*Enter CORPORAL SYKES discreetly from stairs, he gets R.C.*)

GRAHAM (*as before*). Nothing, sir.

SYKES (*coming forward*). Excuse me, sir. The young lady of the house would like to speak to you, sir. (*Addressing the GENERAL.*)

ROOT. Right. Ask her to come in.

(*SYKES goes to stairs, signs to DOROTHY, then goes to door R. and exits.*)

ROOT. What on earth can she want?

GRAHAM. I expect it's about the room, sir.

(*Enter DOROTHY; she comes down R. The GENERAL is a little overpowered by the sight of such a charming creature in his prosaic head-quarters. He looks almost jaunty as he advances towards her with a little bow.*)

ROOT. Bon jore, Mad'mo'selle. (*Gets c.*)

DOROTHY (*with a slight curtsy*). Bon jour, mon Général. (*Down R.C.*)

ROOT. Ha, ahem! Graham—er—would you kindly go and see about—er—about my horse.

GRAHAM (*dryly*). Oh, certainly sir. (*Puts on his cap, salutes and goes.*)

(*Exit GRAHAM, door L. up stage, which he closes.*)

ROOT (*to DOROTHY*). Je ne suis pas—er—er—voulez-vous—er—I'm afraid I can't talk French.

DOROTHY (*shyly*). I can spik a leetle Angleesh.

ROOT. Oh, that's capital. We shall get along swimmingly.

DOROTHY (*looking puzzled*). What ees "sweemingly"?

ROOT. Oh, er—(*business with hands, imitating fishes swimming*)—er—like a fish, don't you know.

DOROTHY. I see. We shall get on—how ees it?

ROOT. Like a fish. (*Repeat bus. of hands, which DOROTHY copies.*)

DOROTHY (*laughing*). I see, like a feeshes.

ROOT. Excellent. (*Taking out cigarette case.*) May I offer you a cigarette?

DOROTHY. Sank you vair mooch, non. It makes bad for ze voice.

ROOT. The voice? Ah! (*Taking out a cigarette.*) Will you forgive me if I have one? (*Goes to table L. side for match.*)

(*DOROTHY nods and crosses to fireplace.*)

(*The GENERAL, standing on L. side of table, turns, admiringly following her movements with his eyes. He lights a cigarette.*)

So you're on the stage, are you? (*Gets to R. end of couch.*)

DOROTHY. Oui, mon Général? (*At L. side of couch.*)

ROOT (*gallantly*). In gay Paree—what?

DOROTHY. Oui, Monsieur. À Paris.

ROOT (*quite overpowered at entertaining a French actress*). Oh—er—er—won't you sit down?

DOROTHY. Oh, but I must not stay—because—

ROOT (*breezily*). Oh, nonsense. (*Throwing his cigarette into fireplace and indicating settee.*) Do sit down.

DOROTHY (*warily*). Oh non, Monsieur le Général. Vous avez beaucoup d'affaires. You are beesee zis morning. I trouble you.

ROOT. No, indeed you don't. I'm not a bit busy. Do sit down, and I'll practise my French with you. (*Leans over back of couch.*)

(*DOROTHY sits L.C. of couch.*)

DOROTHY. Comment?

ROOT (*awkwardly*). Er—assay-ay-vo—et—et—nous parlons parlerons fronçay.

DOROTHY. Oui, Monsieur. Mais vous parlez très bien français.

ROOT. Oh, I'm afraid I don't really, you know. (*Comes to front of couch.*)

DOROTHY (*flatteringly*). Mais oui. Vous avez un bon accent.

ROOT. Oh, er—yes. Yes. I can *pronounce* the stuff all right, but I never remember the words. (*Sits beside her in R. corner of couch.*)

DOROTHY. Oh, you will learn zat—some day.

ROOT. I hope so. Yes. (*Pause.*) Er—tell me, when are you going back to Paris?

DOROTHY. Oh, after four or five days per'aps. I do not know exactment.

ROOT. You've got a flat there, I suppose?

DOROTHY (*off her guard*). Oh, non. (*Confusedly.*) C'est-à-dire, oui. Oui, mon Général. I—I 'ave a—"flat," do you call it? I did not remember ze word.

ROOT. It must be a very nice one. (*Edging nearer her.*)

DOROTHY. Oh yais. A vairiee nice flat. (*She retreats on seat.*)

ROOT. A little one? (*Nearer still, she moves further away.*)

DOROTHY. Oui—mais—not too leetle, vous comprenez? A nice leetle flat.

ROOT. I see. Small—but not too small. Well, perhaps I shall be coming to Paris one of these days.

DOROTHY (*unguardedly*). Oh, zat would be vair nice.

(*He looks at her killingly.*)

Er—vair nice for you, mon Général.

ROOT. Perhaps you'll allow me to come and call on you. (*By now he has driven her right into the corner of the couch.*)

DOROTHY (*making the best of a bad job*). Vous êtes très gentil, mon Général.

ROOT (*pushing his advantage*). Would you like me to come?

DOROTHY. Oh, vair mooch—yais. (*To turn the conversation, and to force a retreat.*) Tell me, what is zat? (*She points to his Order of the Bath.*)

(*The GENERAL retreats a little.*)

ROOT (*awkwardly*). Oh—er—that's the C.B., you know.

DOROTHY (*following it up quickly*). And what is zat? (*Pointing again and getting nearer the GENERAL, who slides further away along the seat.*)

ROOT (*still more awkwardly*). That's the D.S.O.—er—er—couldn't we—

DOROTHY (*quickly*). And zat? (*Pointing again and edging nearer him.*)

(*He retreats to his own corner.*)

ROOT (*very embarrassed*). That's the Soudan Medal, Omdurman and all that.

(DOROTHY has now got him in his own corner, and she slides back to other end of couch, and with extended hand keeps him there, pointing to medal.)

DOROTHY. Oh, and you 'ave ze Legion d'Honneur too. What a great great soldier you must be.

ROOT (*immensely flattered*). Well, really, it hardly amounts to that, you know. (*Advancing towards her.*) Still——

DOROTHY. Oh, yais. I can see zat you are a great man.

ROOT (*ponderously, taking her hand*). Do you know you're a very nice little girl.

DOROTHY (*breaking away from him*). Oh non, mon Général.

ROOT (*getting hold of both her hands*). Yes, you are. I hope I shall see a lot of you while you're here. Er—er—rub up my French a bit, you know. (*Squeezes her hand affectionately.*)

DOROTHY (*nervously*). Oh, but I must not stay no longer now. Please, Monsieur—I—— (*Rises.*)

(*He retains one hand.*)

ROOT. But bless me, my dear, you haven't told me yet what you came to see me about. Can't let you go till you've done that. (*Draws her on to seat again.*)

DOROTHY (*artfully*). Oh. (*She sits again.*) I come because my mozer say you are vair—what is it—not comfortable in your room—and so—I will ask zat you will please to take my room.

ROOT (*rising, overpowered at the suggestion*). But my dear Mad'mo'selle, certainly not. I wouldn't dream of such a thing. It's most extremely kind of you, but tell your mother that I'm very comfortable where I am.

DOROTHY. Non, mon Général. It ess propaire for you to have my room. Please to accept.

ROOT (*with finality—backing away protestingly*). Now understand definitely. I'll do nothing of the kind.

DOROTHY (*overjoyed, rises*). Well, I will tell my mother—(*crosses R.*)—but it would be better that you would have the room.

(*As she crosses the GENERAL follows her, and stops when she turns to him.*)

ROOT (R.C. *Taking her hand in a paternal way and holding it*). Please don't say another word about the matter.

(GLENISTER appears in the doorway. A look of despair settles on his face. You can imagine him saying, "There, I knew that would happen." He leaves the door open and keeps his hat on for the remainder of the scene.)

(*Continues.*) You really are a very nice little girl. (*He lifts her hand to his grizzled moustache. GLENISTER'S face convulses with fury.*)

GLENISTER (*warmly. He remains by door*). The horses are waiting, General.

ROOT (*pretending to examine one of DOROTHY's rings*). Eh? Oh yes. Really it is a beautiful ring.

GLENISTER (*firmly*). The horses, sir. (GLENISTER scowls at DOROTHY.)

ROOT (*a little embarrassed*). All right, Glenister. I'll just go and put on my spurs.

(Exit GENERAL clattering up stairs. GLENISTER drops down stage L.C.)

DOROTHY (*goes up stage—looks after GENERAL, then down to GLENISTER*). Harry, why did you look at me like that?

GLENISTER (*bitterly*). I wasn't exactly edified by the situation.

DOROTHY (*stamping her foot*). Harry, you're a horrid jealous baby! (*Cross to fire*.)

GLENISTER. Well, what were you doing?

DOROTHY (*hotly*). I came down here to make quite certain that your stupid old General shouldn't grab my room by the simple expedient of offering it to him. When you came in he was thanking me and, as I expected, refusing to turn me out. He was very nice indeed about it.

GLENISTER. Yes, but why on earth run risks by coming down here to see him? (*Gets c.*) You'll give the whole show away—I know you will—or else he'll start making love to you—and in either case we shall get into the most awful hole. (*Solemnly*.) You don't know what an old terror he is.

DOROTHY. Harry, you're awfully cross and unreasonable.

GLENISTER (*cutting in*). Unreasonable! It's enough to make anyone—— (*Turns away towards window*.)

DOROTHY (*cutting in*). Oh well, if you're going to snap my head off——

(*She turns away and begins to go to door; he watches till she is just about to go out*.)

GLENISTER (*suddenly*). Dolly! Dolly! (*Gets to head of arm-chair*.)

DOROTHY (*stopping and turning*). Yes. (*Standing in doorway—door open*.)

GLENISTER. Do come back.

(*She turns her back on him and shrugs her shoulder*.)

I'm awfully sorry.

(DOROTHY turns slowly, and comes L. of him, and puts her hand on back of chair.)

DOROTHY. You won't be jealous any more?

GLENISTER. I'll try not to be. (*Puts his hand on hers*.)

DOROTHY. All right. I'll forgive you this time.

(*She looks swiftly round and then kisses him quickly, and runs out L. waving her hand from the doorway and closing the door behind her.*)

(*GLENISTER looks after her and shakes his head as though he had forebodings of the difficulties ahead. When she has gone he goes to desk and begins collecting papers for the day and putting them in his pocket. Whilst he is doing so GRAHAM opens door slowly and peeps round it; his hat is in his hand.*)

GRAHAM. Hullo, Glenny! Got over the sulks? (*Enters room, leaves door open, throws his hat on table up stage.*)

(*GLENNY grunts and goes on with what he is doing.*)

(*Slight pause. GRAHAM stands staring through open door after DOROTHY.*)

Isn't she a peach, Glenny?

GLENISTER (*exasperated into speech*). How the hell do I know?

GRAHAM. Why, good Lord, man, she's only just left the room.

(*Comes to head of desk. GLENISTER turns away from him.*)

GLENISTER (*testily*). Well, what about it?

GRAHAM. Oh, nothing.

(*He comes in front of desk. GLENISTER turns further away, then swings round on GRAHAM.*)

GLENISTER (*in a withering tone*). I've something better to do with my eyes than glue them on every girl I meet.

GRAHAM (*easily*). It's all right, old boy. You needn't make excuses. (*Lolls on chair L. of table, rocks on hind legs, puts hands behind head.*)

GLENISTER (*to turn the conversation and convey an impression of indifference*). I say, where's that bundle of papers that came from Division this morning? (*Hunts through desk drawers.*)

GRAHAM. Don't know. Haven't seen 'em. They're probably somewhere. (*Unable to keep off the forbidden subject.*) I say, Glenny?

GLENISTER (*still looking for papers and keeping up the pose of indifference*). Well, what is it?

GRAHAM. While you and the General are over at Laurette I'm going to ask her to lunch here.

GLENISTER (*exasperated beyond measure—springing up*). You're WHAT?

GRAHAM. I'm going to have the peach to lunch.

GLENISTER (*furiously; he comes to L. side of GRAHAM*). Now understand, Graham, you'll do nothing of the kind. Just remember this is a Brigade Mess, not a night club. The General would sack you on the spot and serve you damned well right, too. (*Viciously.*)

I wonder you didn't get a staff job in England, if you wanted to trail about after women all day long.

GRAHAM. All right, don't get stuffy. I'll take her out to lunch if you object to her coming here.

GLENISTER (*fiercely*). She won't go.

GRAHAM (*knowingly*). Oh, won't she, old bird? You wait and see.

GLENISTER (*warmly*). Well, I wish you'd drop the subject of women, Graham, it bores me inconceivably. (*Gets down L. back to audience, his hands working convulsively. He faces GRAHAM.*)

GRAHAM (*sympathetically*). Poor old Glenney—that's the worst of being married.

GLENISTER (*grimly*). Is it?

GRAHAM (*in a worldly tone*). One's so fearfully tied down.

GLENISTER. Is one?

GRAHAM (*loftily*). Mind you, I don't believe your missus would mind a bit.

GLENISTER (*suspiciously*). Mind what?

GRAHAM. Mind you having a cheery time with a pretty girl like the peach.

(GLENISTER strides past GRAHAM up stage, savagely.)

(*Hastily.*) Of course I didn't mean anything serious—just a little entente, you know.

GLENISTER (*coldly. He picks up his gloves from the window seat*). As I said before, Graham, this conversation is most distasteful. (*Sententiously.*) I think it's absolutely rotten to talk about a girl like that—even if she is only the landlady's daughter. (*Putting on his gloves as he talks. He gets to head of table, facing stairs.*)

(*Enter GENERAL from stairs, fully dressed, booted and spurred. He carries a riding-crop and is wearing Sam Browne belt, but no shoulder-strap. He wears his brass hat.*)

ROOT (*heartily*). Well, Glenister, what did you think of her? Damned fine woman, isn't she?

GLENISTER (*icily*). Is she? I really didn't notice.

ROOT (*with raised eyebrows*). Didn't notice? Some of you married men seem to lose your eye for a pretty woman as soon as you get tied up. You think there's no pebble on the beach except your own wife—until you fall in love with somebody else's.

GLENISTER (*in an off-hand tone*). I'm afraid your epigrams are rather over my head, General.

(*As GENERAL moves away, he goes to window and gets riding cane.*)

ROOT (*gruffly*). Epigrams be damned—don't be a prig. (*He walks down to R.C.*)

(To GRAHAM.) Look here, I don't see why we shouldn't ask her to dinner to-night.

(GRAHAM mutters "Hooray," does a complete swing round on his heel and comes smartly to "attention" as he sees the GENERAL looking at him.)

(Observing that the others are a bit scandalized.) Nothing like being on good terms with the inhabitants—what?

GRAHAM (gleefully). I think that's a splendid idea, sir.

ROOT. All right. You'd better fix it up while we're out.

(Walks briskly up R. side of stage, crosses at back, and goes out through open door L. Simultaneously GRAHAM does a rapid stiff, semi-goose-step walk right across front of stage to R. side. Then he turns and faces door through which the GENERAL has gone.)

(To GLENISTER.) Come along, Glenister, the horses are getting cold. (Goes out door L., leaves it open.)

(GLENISTER goes to door.)

GRAHAM (by the table R. side—with emphasis). Shall you be back to lunch, sir?

ROOT (from outside). No.

(GLENISTER in doorway turns and shakes his fist at GRAHAM, who grimaces in reply and dances first on one leg and then on the other.)

(Outside.) Do come on, for God's sake, Glenister.

GLENISTER (with a final shake). Coming, sir.

(He goes out. GRAHAM, laughing uproariously, sinks on chair R. of table.)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The same. After dinner.*

NOTE.—GRAHAM'S cap is hanging on peg on wall behind door.

GLENISTER'S cap (*substitute fac-simile*) is on the knob of the end banister. DOROTHY'S vanity bag is hanging on the back of the chair on which she sits. The chair that, in Act I, was down L. below fireplace, has been brought to L. side of table for GLENISTER'S use.

GENERAL, GLENISTER, GRAHAM and DOROTHY are discovered sitting at coffee. GLENISTER looks remarkably bored; the rest are in high spirits. The GENERAL in particular is getting on very well with DOROTHY, and is in remarkably good form. They are all chattering merrily, except GLENISTER.

GRAHAM (*L. of table*). Now then, cheer up, Glenney, or you'll be giving Mademoiselle the jimjams.

DOROTHY (*R. of table*). Djhim djhams—what is “djhim djhams”?

ROOT (*at head of table, gallantly*). Something far too unpleasant to be allowed to trouble you.

DOROTHY (*flirting outrageously*). You are vair nice to say so.

GLENISTER (*who is seated a little away from the table, below GRAHAM, makes the old hackneyed excuse*). I'm awfully sorry to be dull. I've the most maddening toothache.

(*Rises, goes R.C.*)

DOROTHY (*forgetting her accent*). Oh, have you? (*Anxiously.*) Is it bad?

GLENISTER (*scared out of his skin that her anxiety will give the show away. He turns hastily to her*). No, no. It's nothing, I assure you—a touch of the sun.

ROOT (*dryly*). Very unpleasant, I believe—a touch of the sun on a bad tooth.

GLENISTER. Yes, most! Most! (*Goes down R.*)

DOROTHY (*remembering her accent this time*). Is it vairee bad?

GLENISTER (*forcing out a sort of lopsided smile*). Oh no, Mademoiselle. It's nothing at all. Just a momentary twinge. (*Goes to his chair again.*)

ROOT (*with paternal solicitude*). You have a glass of port, Glenney my boy. That'll put you right.

GLENISTER (*darkly*). Thank you, General. I'm afraid it'll take more than port. (*But he fills his glass all the same and the port circulates.*)

(GRAHAM *also fills his glass—he has just had enough to make him a little reckless in what he says. . . . He rises, putting his glass down on the table.*)

GRAHAM. I think it now falls upon me as junior officer and therefore, by immemorial custom, Mess President of the Brigade, to propose the health of Mademoiselle Juliette—(*dries up ; and half draws his speech notes, which are written on a long narrow bit of paper, out of his left breast pocket, consults them and continues*)—and what might otherwise have been a mere duty becomes the keenest pleasure when it is associated with one so fascinating and delightful as our guest.

ROOT (*encouragingly*). Hear, hear !

GRAHAM (*banteringly*). I cannot pretend to the wit and wisdom of the gentleman on my left—now Glenney, bow, you surly old fiddle—

(*He thumps GLENISTER on the back, causing him to “bow” involuntarily.*)

—but then he is a married man, and no doubt has learned to use his tongue in the bitter school of experience.

DOROTHY. Oh, do his wife—how do you call it?—“henpeck” at him, then ?

GRAHAM. Something awful. Can't you see that by his expression.

(GLENISTER *emits the ghost of a forced laugh.*)

However, to continue. (*Repeats “business” with speech notes.*) Were I Glenister and Glenister Graham, there were a Graham would—would fairly make you all sit up and take notice. But that would be a pity ; for then I should be the married man and so precluded—at any rate conventionally—from taking my heart in my two hands—thus—(*puts his hands on his heart, and then extends them to DOROTHY as if offering it to her. Business—not too burlesque*)—and laying it at the feet of— (*Pauses, and leans over table to DOROTHY.*)

(GLENISTER *furious.*)

the most beautiful woman I have ever met.

(*He gazes ardently at DOROTHY and GLENISTER half rises in his chair ; then he continues.*)

Gentlemen !

(*They all stand except DOROTHY.*)

Fill your glasses, please, and join me in drinking success, happiness, everything that Fortune can give to Mademoiselle Juliette Denaux—and as near an approach to the perfect man as can be found for her husband.

(He says this while straightening his necktie ; palpably he is referring to himself.)

ROOT
GLENISTER } *(dispersedly)*. A la votre. La santé. Mademoi-
GRAHAM } selle. A votre bonheur, etc.

(They drain their glasses, then chatter, and resume their seats, all except GLENISTER, who is sulking, calling on her to make a speech. She protests her inability to do so, but at last she yields.)

(DOROTHY rises, they clap their hands enthusiastically.)

DOROTHY. Mon General, et mes officiers, I sank you vair vair moch for ze honneur you pay me——

GENERAL. Not at all. The honour is ours.

DOROTHY. A leetall French girl, in asking me to eat with you, and I sank you more than I cannot say for drinking to me.

GRAHAM. A pleasure. A privilege.

DOROTHY. I wish vair moch zat I can accept ze heart of ze kind officier——

(GRAHAM rises, and leans over table towards her in mute adoration.)

——who has been speaking and give him mine in exchange. But zat is not possible,

(GLENISTER is unable to restrain a guffaw. GRAHAM resumes his seat and leans back in his chair looking with undisguised anger at GLENISTER, who has turned his back on him.)

as I have myself—*(she steals a tender glance at GLENISTER)*——a lover who is fighting for his patrie a long time now, and—*(her voice breaks a little)*——if le bon Dieu is willing, he will come back to me at ze end of the war.

(The GENERAL, genuinely affected, reaches out and pats her hand. She smiles at him. The GENERAL retains her hand and says.)

GENERAL. Yes, yes, yes, of course, of course. *(He holds her hand. She climbs on her chair.)*

DOROTHY. But for now, mes officiers, I must ask you to drink a—what is it—toast, n'est-ce pas ?—a toast with me. *(In a thrilling tone.)* I ask you to drink to La France, belle, magnifique, glorieuse.

ROOT *(standing)*. Ah, splendid.

NOTE.—*There must be plenty of animation all through this dinner scene. (The others stand.)*

DOROTHY. Oui, glorieuse et splendide. (*Raises her glass.*) Ah, mes officiers, La belle France.

ALL (*drinking*). La belle France!

(*They sit, and chatter merrily.*)

ROOT. Well, after all this sentimental—ah—sentiment, I don't think a smoke would hurt us. (*Producing his cigarette case.*) Will you, Mademoiselle?

DOROTHY. No, sank you.

ROOT (*holding it out*). Glenny?

GLENISTER. No, thanks, General. I'll smoke a cigar. (*Takes one from box offered by GRAHAM.*)

ROOT (*about to light up—to DOROTHY*). You don't mind smoke, I hope?

DOROTHY (*eagerly*). Oh non, Monsieur.

GRAHAM (*rises, stands behind his chair*). Will you excuse me now, sir? I've got a lot of things to do.

ROOT. Sorry you've got to go after that excellent speech.

GRAHAM. I'm afraid I must though, sir.

ROOT. All right, if Mademoiselle will excuse you.

DOROTHY (*wickedly*). Oh, I am sorry you haf to go.

(*GLENISTER, who is growing steadily more and more out of temper, rises and goes down to fireplace, where he stands with his back to them.*)

GRAHAM (*delighted*). Well—of course, I mean to say——

(*Hastily coming to the front of his chair and about to sit.*)

ROOT (*cutting in*). No, you don't, Graham. If you've got work to do, run along and do it.

(*GRAHAM rises, and gets behind his chair again.*)

Don't leave it for somebody else—it'll only mean that I have to do it in the long run.

GRAHAM. I'll go now, sir. (*GRAHAM comes behind the General and drops down below DOROTHY facing her. To DOROTHY.*) Good-night, Mademoiselle. The most beautiful dreams to you, and may I have the luck to be in them. (*She gives him her hand which he kisses. He sighs, and stands, holding her hand.*)

(*GLENISTER has turned, watching them. When GRAHAM kisses her hand, he savagely hurls the ash off his cigar into the fire.*)

DOROTHY. Good naight, Monsieur!

GRAHAM (*in high spirits*). Bonne nuit, Mademoiselle. (*He walks towards the door, and gets his hat off the peg behind the door.—To ROOT.*) Good night, sir.

ROOT. Good night, my boy.

GRAHAM (*to GLENISTER*). See you later on perhaps, Glenny.

GLENISTER. Yes. Are you coming back here?

GRAHAM. No. Going straight to the billet.

GLENISTER (*gruffly*). All right.

(*Exit GRAHAM, door L., up stage which he closes after him.*)

ROOT (*to DOROTHY, rises*). Well, my dear, I'm going to turn in now.

(*See NOTE in Lighting Plot.*)

I'm getting on, you know.

(*She half rises.*)

No. Don't you move, you stay here and talk for a bit. Causez un peu. Comprenez ?

DOROTHY. Oui, mon General.

ROOT (*standing facing her*). It has been delightful having you with us for dinner. More delightful than you can imagine. Made us remember our manners—(*looks and speaks at GLENISTER, who shows that the shaft has gone home*)—which one is apt to forget out here. (*Turns again to DOROTHY.*) I hope you'll come again one night.

DOROTHY. I shall be vair pleased. (*Rises.*)

ROOT. I hope you won't think me rude for going to bed. It is necessary for me. I always do. Je ne suis pas si—si—young as I used to be. Comprenez ? (*Laughs good-humouredly.*)

DOROTHY. Ah, oui, mon General, effectivement.

ROOT (*holding out his hand*). Well, good night, my dear.

(*DOROTHY rises and curtsies to him ; he bows formally and kisses her hand.*)

Good night, Glenny, my boy.

GLENISTER. Good night, General.

(*Exit ROOT, up the stairs.*)

DOROTHY (*after his exit, DOROTHY goes to foot of stairs, laughs lightly, and looks after him.*) What a darling old man.

GLENISTER (*a little sulkily*). Humph. (*Sits on couch.*)

DOROTHY. What do you mean—"humph"—Harry, dear ? Don't you like your General ? (*Comes down R.C.*)

GLENISTER. Oh, yes, he's all right.

DOROTHY. Well, what's the matter then, dear ? (*Comes to foot of couch.*)

GLENISTER (*awkwardly*). Nothing.

DOROTHY. But it is something. (*Gets behind couch and leans over.*) You've been so strange all through dinner. (*With sudden anxiety.*) You've not been wounded or anything awful, have you ? (*Putting her hands on his shoulders.*)

GLENISTER (*laughing it off*). Good Lord—no.

DOROTHY (*comes round to the front of couch, sits R. of him*). Well, what is it, Harry darling ? You're making me anxious about you.

(*Slight pause.*) Is it your toothache again? (*Leans her head on his shoulder.*)

GLENISTER. No, Dolly. I hadn't any toothache.

DOROTHY. Hadn't any toothache—(*lifting her head in surprise*)—but you said at dinner—

GLENISTER (*slightly irritated*). Couldn't you see that was only an excuse.

NOTE.—*In this scene between DOROTHY and GLENISTER, it is important that he never speaks roughly to his wife, but his anger is unmistakable when speaking of GRAHAM.*

DOROTHY (*amazed*). An excuse—what for? (*Pause—in a tone of amazed horror.*) Harry! You dreadful boy! You've been jealous again. Oh, Harry! (*He turns away.*) Jealous of that dear kind old General! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

GLENISTER (*sulkily*). No, I'm not. (*Very emphatically.*)

DOROTHY (*wistfully*). Harry darling, you're not speaking very kindly to me. (*Slight pause.*) Why should you be jealous of the poor old General? You'll make our life miserable if you get jealous of every one I speak to.

GLENISTER (*savagely*). You know perfectly well, Dolly, that I'm not jealous of anybody—certainly not the General. (*Rises, walks to foot of table c., his back to DOROTHY.*) I'm simply fed up with that young cad Graham. (*Crushes the butt end of his cigar on the ash tray.*)

DOROTHY (*astonished*). With Mr. Graham? But my dear—(*Rises.*)

GLENISTER (*facing her*). What right has he to make his damned play-acting speeches at my wife? (*Through his teeth.*) I've a good mind to thrash the young hound. (*Goes slightly R.*)

DOROTHY (*coldly*). Harry, you're talking great nonsense, as you'll realize when you recover your temper.

GLENISTER (*curtly*). I've not lost my temper yet.

DOROTHY (*more kindly*). Well, you're getting that way, dear, so pull up before you do. (*Soothingly.*) Poor Mr. Graham. He meant so nicely, and he did it so charmingly. (*Turns to fire.*)

GLENISTER (*sarcastically*). Most charmingly.

(DOROTHY turns her back on him.)

Then there's that luncheon business. (*Comes R.C.*)

DOROTHY. What luncheon business, dear? (*Turns, faces him and comes L.C.*)

GLENISTER (*hotly*). Didn't the scoundrel ask you to lunch with him alone?

DOROTHY (*coldly*). He sent me a very polite invitation which I very politely refused.

GLENISTER (*approvingly*). Just as well you did. (*With rising anger.*) If you heard the way the young beast talks of you—the

peach, if you please—and—and names like that—and to be unable to strangle him because——

DOROTHY (*going to him, interrupting*). Harry, stop this at once. I don't care what you say, he's a very nice boy, and he's been awfully kind . . . and *you're* behaving like a bear. (*Turns L.C.*)

GLENISTER (*icily*). I shall refrain from any comment whatever on *your* behaviour.

DOROTHY (*warmly*). Take care, Harry.

GLENISTER (*bitingly*). Since you like the dear little chap so much, I hope you'll accede to his final request and dream about him. (*Turns up to window, rests his right elbow on recess side, and supports his head with right hand.*)

DOROTHY (*icily*). Very well, Harry. You choose to behave like a savage. (*Goes between couch and table to arm-chair.*) I'm extremely sorry I've troubled you with such a nuisance as I appear to be. (*Crosses to stairs, stands on the first step, pauses, turns to him.*) It's unnecessary to add that I shall *not* come down to-night.

GLENISTER (*icily*). Pray don't. (*He just glances at her, and then looks out of window again.*)

(DOROTHY *exits out of sight. He runs to foot of stairs, and calls her. She returns to top of stairs.*)

Dolly! Dolly! Don't go.

(*She stands at head of stairs, biting her lips to keep the tears back, and turns away and exits. He stands looking after her for a moment, and then bursts out with a muttered "Damn!"*)

(*He snatches his hat off the banister knob, faces door, bangs hat on the floor, taking care that the opening is uppermost, puts his toe inside it, and then kicks it up in the air. SYKES, at that very moment, enters through door L. and deftly catches the hat as it falls, and hands it back to GLENISTER as if he did it every day. GLENISTER takes it and shame-facedly dusts and straightens it.*)

SYKES. At what time breakfast in the morning, sir?

GLENISTER (*surlily*). How the hell do I know?

(*He strides out, through door L. up.*)

(*SYKES stands looking after him, shakes his head knowingly, shuts door, and looks round the room. As he gets to head of table, the bottle of port catches his eye. He stops, lifts it up, looks through it, finds there is some left in it, and he takes it with him, and goes out R., shutting door.*)

(*Stage vacant.*)

(DOROTHY *enters from stairs, crosses up stage, and gets near window.*)

DOROTHY (*softly*). Harry, dear.

(*There is no answer and she comes down stage a little and stands half-crying.*)

DOROTHY. Harry!

(DOROTHY almost breaks down.)

(SYKES enters R. disturbed by her voice.)

DOROTHY. Oh, mon Corporal. I come back for my sacque.

SYKES. Sack? (*Looks on floor.*)

(DOROTHY gets bag off chair.)

SYKES (*woodenly*). Very good, miss.

(*She goes out, upstairs.*)

(SYKES looks after her; again nods knowingly, and goes to door R. and opens it.)

(*Calls.*) Now then, lightning, 'urry up. (*Takes chair from L. side of table [GLENISTER'S] and puts it to its original place in Act I, below fire-place.*)

(*Enter JENKS, from door R. carrying clearing tray.*)

JENKS. They orl gone, Corp'ral? (*Puts tray on table R. side.*)

SYKES. Yes. (*Comes round to L. side of table.*) Come and let's get the table cleared.

(*The following conversation goes on whilst the table is cleared.*)

JENKS. My, she's a 'igh stepper, ain't she, Corp?

SYKES. You mind your clearing, me lad. 'Igh steppers is nothing to do with us. (*Takes candles off table and places them on either side of desk. See No. 1 cue, Lighting Plot.*)

JENKS (*propitiatingly*). Or rite, Corp'ral, I'm lookin' to it. . . . But I sye, did you 'ear ole Glenney go orf pop after she went out?

SYKES (*darkly*). It's my belief, Jenks, me lad, that there's something mighty queer be'ind all this. You mark my words now.

JENKS (*hoarsely*). Wot, weddins an' sich?

SYKES (*disgusted*). Weddins yer grandmother. (*Putting down the pile of plates he's moving.*) Now, look 'ere, Jenks. You know the room 'is nibs 'ad before.

JENKS. Wot, the one ole Rooty Tooty 'ad?

SYKES (*in a tone of disapproval*). You're very free with yer nick-names, me lad.

JENKS. Orl rite, Corp, get on wiv the story.

SYKES. Well, it's as I say. Yer know that room—well, 'e ain't got it this time. 'Cos why? Cos 'er ladyship's there.

JENKS. Wot, the ole gal's dorter?

SYKES. Ah, Dorter me foot. She's no more relation of the old

hen on this 'ere farm than you nor me. (*Shaking head.*) No, Jenks ! No !

JENKS (*becoming hoarse again in his excitement*). Well, wot is it then ?

SYKES. Yes—that's wot I'd like ter know. Yer don't catch 'is nibs givin' up a good bedroom and sleeping in the 'ayloft for nothin'. There's somethin' be'ind it all. (*Bus, tapping nose.*)

JENKS (*nodding sagaciously*). Ah, Corp, I reckon you're mebbe right there. (*Goes to sideboard, opens drawer which he leaves open, and gets out folded coloured table-cloth. He then returns to R. side of table.*)

SYKES. I'm dead sure I am. You take it from me, Jenks, there's going to be queer doings in this 'ouse, before morning. Now then !

JENKS (*shaking his head with a rotary movement*). Mighty queer.

SYKES. As you say, Jenks, mighty queer. (*Imitating rotary movement.*) Then the Captain— (*Takes off American table-cloth and folds it up.*)

JENKS. Glenny ?

SYKES (*sharply*). Captain Glenister. What's he doin' a married man a kissin' an' huggin' that girl this morning before me an' everybody.

JENKS (*sinking into chair R. nursing table-cloth and unable to believe his ears*). Kissin' of her ?

SYKES. You bet, an' huggin' her an' calling her Dorothy—and the ole gal calls her Juliet or something. That's wot gave me the tip about 'er not bein' the ole gal's dorter.

JENKS (*rubbing his cheek reflectively*). P'reaps that's wot they call 'er stage name.

SYKES (*taken back*). Wot, Dorothy ?

JENKS (*nodding*). Ah !

SYKES. Yes, I thort of that, too—

(*SYKES throws his folded table-cloth across to JENKS, who catches it, and immediately throws his across to SYKES, who also catches it.*)

—but where'd Captain Glenister get to know 'er stage name ?

JENKS (*after a moment's thought, rises, and leans over table*). 'E might 'ave read it on a programme. (*Rubs his right leg with his left leg crossed over it.*)

SYKES (*taking refuge behind the general*). Well, any'ow there's my opinion. (*SYKES spreads the table-cloth over the table.*)

(*JENKS watches him.*)

JENKS. An' I wouldn't wonder if you was right, Corp. (*Puts the white table-cloth in sideboard drawer and closes drawer.*)

SYKES. An' I'll tell you something further. (*JENKS looks at him attentively.*) I ain't so sure that she's French.

JENKS (*hoarsely*). Wot—a English actress ? (*Brings glasses and spirit bottle on tray to table.*)

SYKES. Well, I wouldn't say necessarily English! One of them nootrals per'aps.

JENKS. Then wot's she doin' 'ere?

SYKES. No good, you can be sure of that.

JENKS. Now 'ere's something. If Glenney's married, why's 'im and Graham almost fighting each other over this bit o' goods 'ere? It don't seem right.

(Arranging glasses on table, he purloins a handful of cigarettes from the box, and puts them in the right pocket of his trousers.)

SYKES *(severely)*. Me lad, when you've been in the Army as long as I 'ave, you'll understand that officers is officers and not to be criticized by the rank and file.

JENKS. But Corpral—

SYKES *(in his best parade manner)*. That'll do, me lad, take them plates out, will you?

JENKS *(humbly)*. Yes, Corpral. *(He gets the tray, laden with things, off the sideboard, and comes down R. by door, about 3 feet away from it. He gives a whistle to attract the CORPORAL'S attention, and then nods in direction of door.)* Open lar port, sivvoo play.

(SYKES crosses him going behind him, opens door. JENKS goes out.)

SYKES *(calling after him)*. Nah, then, look smart about it, me lad. *(Shuts door.)*

(SYKES goes up to desk, and blows out the candle on lower end; he then blows out the candle on upper end of desk—standing between the candles and audience so that he is not seen working the switches—he then goes to door L. up stage, opens it and blows out the light there; he walks across stage to banister, blows out the lamp above it—see cue No. 2 Lighting Plot—gets to lamp on sideboard, blows that out—see cue No. 3 Lighting Plot—goes down to door R., opens it, there is a light burning in the passage, and exits.)

(During this time he is softly singing the song below, doing the business as marked above the notes, and below them last line.)

Words of song.

The judge look'd up in anger,

The pris'ner 'ung 'is 'ead,

The mother wot was weepin'

Turned to the judge and said:—

"Don't send my boy to prisin,

It's the fust crime wot 'e's done,"

"Orl rite, then I forgive 'im,

Tike away yer erring son."

(The stage is left in complete darkness for a short time.)

(DOROTHY comes cautiously in from stairs. She is dressed in a white negligée and with her hair down in plaits. Has a wrap round her shoulders and carries a small electric torch, which she flashes on stage

before she enters. She keeps light on and descends stairs. She stands irresolutely by the table for a few seconds, looking towards the window; then she goes to window, draws curtain, opens it and looks out.)

DOROTHY (*looking off L. In an eager whisper*). Harry, are you there?

(There is no reply.)

HARRY! (*Pushes other casement half open and looks off R.*)

(She realizes that he is not there and gives a little sob of pain and disappointment. After a second or two she slowly returns to the table, leaves wrap on back of chair, torch-light out.)

(Just as she has reached it, stealthy footsteps are heard crunching on the gravel outside; she halts, transfigured, listens; and then runs to window, which she flings wide open.)

HARRY! Is that you?

GLENISTER (*without hat. Softly, from outside*). Yes, darling!

DOROTHY (*in an ecstasy of delight*). Oh Harry, how nice of you to come.

(GLENISTER clammers in and takes her in his arms; they kiss.)

GLENISTER. Have you forgiven me for being such a brute?
(Penitently.)

DOROTHY. Oh, but my dear, have you forgiven me?

GLENISTER (*happily*). Let's leave it at that.

DOROTHY (*nestling up to him contentedly*). Yes.

GLENISTER (*tenderly*). I think it was awfully sporting of you to take all this risk to come and see me.

DOROTHY (*swiftly*). Oh, my dearest, don't talk about risks. It makes me think of the dreadful front. *(She clutches him in the semi-darkness.)* Oh, are you really there?

GLENISTER (*in a husky voice*). Yes. *(They kiss again.)* I can hardly believe it's true.

DOROTHY (*clinging to him*). Nor can I. Oh, Harry, aren't you glad I had the idea?

GLENISTER. Rather. Now where are we going? We can't stay here. The servants might come in or anything.

DOROTHY. Do you think it would wake the General if we tiptoed upstairs. *(Tiptoes towards staircase.)*

GLENISTER. What about Madame?

DOROTHY. I shouldn't think we'd disturb her. She's very old, and besides, I think she more than half suspects the truth. Shall we risk it?

GLENISTER. Well, the General—— *(Breaking off.)* Oh, we'll risk anything. I've been waiting to see you for over three months and now we're wasting time talking about risks. Come along, my dear.

DOROTHY (*softly*). Harry, darling, it's too wonderful to have you again. (*She leans against him.*) I feel quite dazed. I do, really. (*On 1st step.*)

GLENISTER (*tenderly*). Dear old thing. (*They kiss.*)

DOROTHY. Come along quickly, and mind how you tread on the staircase. There are some loose boards. (*She begins to lead the way.*)

(*Footsteps heard crunching on gravel outside window.*)

GLENISTER (*on the alert*). Ssh! What's that? (*Crunch louder.*) Some one's coming in at the window. Quick!

(DOROTHY R. of window. GLENISTER L. of window. *They go behind the curtains on sides furthest from window.*)

(GRAHAM's face appears at the window. He tries it, finds it open and hoists himself in. He takes off his hat and puts it on window-seat. He stands a moment directing the rays of torch round room, and finally on staircase, he goes up staircase quickly, stealthily.)

GLENISTER (*reappearing*). He's gone. (*Grimly.*) In the direction of your room.

DOROTHY (*hotly*). How abominable of him.

GLENISTER. Isn't it damnable?

(*There is a crash overhead.*)

(*The effect is worked in this way:—Place the shorter of the two loose boards—see Property Plot—on the floor, then put the other on it, one end projecting about 9 inches beyond the edge of the under board. Press this projecting end down with the foot as far as it will go, then release the foot smartly, and let the long end of the board clatter back into its place. The under board should be placed at right angles to the upper one.*)

What's that?

DOROTHY. He's tripped over the loose stair board.

GLENISTER. He's coming down again. Get under cover.

(*They do so, retiring behind the curtains, as before.*)

(*Re-enter GRAHAM, down the steps. He limps and bends down rubbing his left shin as he walks, and saying "Ooh!—Oo!" he hobbles to chair R. of table and puts his left foot on it, pulls up his slacks to see what damage has been done, and turns his lighted torch on his calf. The light shows him DOROTHY's scarf on the back of the chair. He at once forgets all about his damaged leg, and sits down, the scarf in his hand; DOROTHY and GLENISTER peep out at R. and L. sides of curtain and watch him.*)

GRAHAM. Her shawl! She's been down here looking for me.

(*He says this slowly, with great tenderness, then he throws the shawl on table and almost runs up the stairs. When he rises, DOROTHY and GLENISTER completely hide behind curtains.*)

GLENISTER (*reappearing as before*). Insufferable young egotist.

DOROTHY. Give me my wrap, please, darling—

(GLENISTER *gets shawl, and puts it over her shoulders.*)

—before any more mistakes are made. What do you suppose he'll do ?

GLENISTER. Knock at your door, perhaps, I don't know.

DOROTHY. Isn't it time he fell over the stair board again ?

GLENISTER. He's avoided it. What a nuisance the whole thing is.

(*The door down R. slowly opens, and JENKS is seen on all fours and SYKES standing up. JENKS falls flat, the door opens to its full extent, SYKES collars JENKS by the scruff of his neck and silently throws him backwards, then, as he draws the door to, is seen to make frantic endeavours to blow out the light in passage. The door shuts.*)

DOROTHY. But it's awfully funny. (*Noise of SYKES blowing at light.*) Ssh ! What's that ?

GLENISTER. What ?

DOROTHY. Some one breathing heavily.

(GLENISTER *leaves DOROTHY, comes down to door R., opens it wide, the passage is in complete darkness.—This is best done by SYKES removing the light from the batten after he has closed the door.—GLENISTER closes the door and returns to DOROTHY.*)

GLENISTER. Corporal Sykes and the servants asleep in the kitchen.

DOROTHY. No. It's coming from the direction of the stairs. (*She points.*) Listen ! what's that ?

(*They listen. Crash is heard.*)

(*The loose stair board effect, as done on page 44, is repeated.*)

ROOT (*off*). Blast the stairs !

GLENISTER. } It's the General.

DOROTHY. }

(DOROTHY and GLENISTER *run up to the window, go behind the curtains from window side—DOROTHY R., GLENISTER L.—run round behind them, come out together on outer side of curtains, take a couple of steps down stage, clasp hands, turn round in a complete circle, dancing about like a couple of bewildered animals that have lost their way. Then GLENISTER down stage position and DOROTHY up stage face desk, and GLENISTER, holding her hand, "trots" her across to desk as he speaks the line of his part. During these move-*

ments of theirs they have been whispering together "What shall we do?—where shall we go?" etc.)

GLENISTER. The only safe place is behind the desk. Quick.

(Enter GENERAL rubbing his shins. He is dressed in a British warm over his pyjamas; he carries a lighted candle in candlestick.)

GENERAL *(under his breath, bitterly)*. This is a damnable house! I'll swear I heard something.

(Another fearful crash over the broken stair board.)

Bless my soul! What's that? *(Sneezes and blows his candle out.)*

(MME. DENAUX'S voice off stage; it sounds like the mew of a cat.)

MME. DENAUX. Juliette! Juliette!

ROOT. What on earth does the old tabby want?

MME. DENAUX *(off, as before)*. Juliette! Juliette!

ROOT. Good heavens! Something must be wrong. I'll go and help.

(Exit GENERAL, up the stairs, with one stiff leg.)

DOROTHY *(appearing helpless with laughter)*. Oh, what are we to do? *(Coming out from top end of desk to front of it.)*

GLENISTER *(desperately coming out from lower end of desk to front)*. God knows. Can't you slip up to your room?

DOROTHY *(sobered)*. And meet Mr. Graham on the staircase. Not much!

MME. DENAUX *(off)*. Juliette! Juliette! Oh-h-h!

(A shrill scream, followed by gruff apologies from the GENERAL.)

GENERAL *(gruffly)*. Pardon. Pardon. I apologize. Madame——

GLENISTER *(gloomily)*. She's met the General. This is the last straw.

(MADAME'S voice is heard, talking excited French at a great rate and in a great rage, and the GENERAL'S voice thunders out above it.)

MME. DENAUX. Oh, mon Dieu! quelle affaire! Qu'est-ce que ça signifie? Ma fille est sortie——

GENERAL. What's that? What's that?

MME. DENAUX. Ma fille, ma fille est sortie—buzz off. Eh? No compris?

(All through this speech of hers the GENERAL protests that he can't make head or tail of it.)

ROOT *(off)*. I say again, Madame. Mille pardons! Je suis—I am very sorry I hurt you. *(Irritated beyond measure by the even flow of her gabble.)* And it's no good going on like that, because I don't understand a damned word you're saying.

GLENISTER. They're coming back. Quick! (*They hide behind desk again.*)

(DOROTHY *top end*, GLENISTER *lower end.*)

(*Enter MADAME DENAUX from stairs; she gets to top end of table C.L. side of it, and puts her lighted candle—in candlestick—on table and folds her arms. She is dressed as given in Dress Plot. The GENERAL follows her, carrying candlestick, the candle relighted—see Lighting Plot, Cue 4—he gets to top of table R. side of it, facing her, and puts candlestick on table near him. From the moment MADAME began to talk outside she has never ceased chattering, and does not do so till she goes out, still talking, her voice dying away after she closes door after her.*)

GENERAL (*irritably*). What is it? What is it you want?

(MADAME *replies with a burst of French.*)

MADAME (*furiously*). Je vous ai dit que ma fille est sortie et ce jeune officier, avec des grands yeux comme ça, il est là, à la porte de sa chambre comme un factionnaire—

ROOT (*getting in a word with great difficulty*). My good woman, I've told you already—I can't understand a damned word you're saying.

MADAME. Quoi? (*Scenting an insult.*) Qu'est-ce que c'est, "damwordyoursaying?" (*She makes an awful hash of this.*) Hein coquin? (*Speaking with slow and rasping emphasis.*) Je vous—ai—dit—que—ma—fille—est—sortie—et—ce jeune—officier.

ROOT (*in despair*). She's going to say it all over again, I know she is! No bon! Can't speakee! No compris! Fetchum interpreter! (*He waves his hands feebly.*)

MADAME (*seizing upon the only word she has understood*). Ah! Interprete? C'est ça? Bon! Moi je vais chercher l'interprete.

(*She turns up to little table by door up stage, taking her candle with her and with her back to audience, still chattering, she switches off her light and switches on the light in the lantern. She picks up the shawl, puts it on, opens door, and goes out with the lantern, still talking. She closes door.*)

ROOT (*sinking on chair by R. side of table*). My God! and this Brigade is supposed to be resting.

(*A footstep is heard on the staircase.*)

Somebody else wandering about now! (*He rises and goes to foot of staircase. Suddenly he chuckles and backs rapidly towards desk.*)

(DOROTHY and GLENISTER, who have been looking over the top, duck their heads out of sight.)

By Gad, it's that little rascal, Juliette! (*He backs into desk.*) Confound the thing! (*Gets to couch, which he turns round so that the fire-*

glow shines on him, curls himself up in it, lifts his head, and says in a hoarse prolonged whisper.) In—here! (Then ducks his head below arm of couch out of sight of anyone in room.)

(Enter GRAHAM from stairs, casting his torch-rays around.)

GRAHAM (coming into room down R., speaks in a hushed whisper). Is that you, Juliette? Where are you? (He creeps towards couch. The GENERAL, after a hasty glance over the arm, crouches back horrified at the situation. GRAHAM sees a figure on the couch, jumps to the wrong conclusion, and advances like a conqueror.) My darling!

(The GENERAL raises his head, and the horrified GRAHAM stands petrified. The GENERAL rises, and GRAHAM retreats backward, light on GENERAL'S face, to table, where he halts, closely followed by the indignant GENERAL, with great dignity.)

ROOT (with all the blistering scorn he can put into his voice). What the hell do you think you're playing at? (They stand facing each other.) Light those lamps.

(GRAHAM turns, goes to sideboard, strikes match and lights lamp, then to the one above banister, lights it too.)

ROOT (at the foot of table C.). Now will you kindly explain what you are doing wandering about my billet at this unearthly hour?

GRAHAM. I have nothing to say, sir. (Up at lamps.)

ROOT (when lamps are lighted—see Cue 5 Lighting Plot). Nothing to say? I should damned well think not, sir. You've been pursuing that helpless little girl upstairs, under cover of being a member of my staff. She has disappeared, and I insist on knowing what you have done with her?

GRAHAM. I haven't seen her. (Comes down to R. side of table.)

ROOT. Have you the damned impudence to stand there and tell me that, after being taken red-handed and mistaking me, me, sir, for your victim?

GRAHAM. Doesn't that prove, sir, that I know nothing of her? I heard your voice in here and thought it was hers—I admit I was following the girl.

ROOT (interrupting). Damnation, sir; do you expect me to believe that my voice sounds like a young French girl's? You say you were following her, so you must have seen her.

GRAHAM. When I say following, I mean, I admit I was—er—chasing her—er—after her. And as for the voice, well, all I can say is, when I came down the stairs I distinctly heard some one whisper the words "in here." So I came in.

ROOT (in some confusion). Oh—er—well, perhaps I did say something. I heard some one moving about, and I thought—er— (Pulling himself together.) However, the girl's disappeared, and the question is, what has become of her?

GRAHAM (*bent on placating the GENERAL*). Well, I'll tell you quite candidly, sir, exactly what happened.

ROOT. No, please don't, Graham. I know the kind of "Candour" to expect when there's a lady in the case. Much better say nothing; it'll be far less confusing.

(*Sits on chair L. of table, turns his coat collar up, and buries his hands up the sleeves of his coat.*)

GRAHAM (*desperately*). Well, sir, I'd like to tell you—whether you believe me or not.

ROOT (*giving it up*). Oh, all right. Go on.

GRAHAM. Well, sir, I couldn't sleep.

ROOT (*dryly*). Most extraordinary. You got a baby too?

GRAHAM. Me, sir?

ROOT. In your billet, you damned fool!

GRAHAM. No, sir. I simply couldn't sleep for thinking of that girl. I know it sounds absurd.

ROOT. It does! Damned absurd. Go on.

GRAHAM. Well, I came back here and stood looking at her window.

ROOT. Her window happens to look out on the back garden—however——

GRAHAM. Well, at the window I thought was hers. At last—I don't know why—I came in here.

ROOT. How did you get in?

GRAHAM (*pointing to window*). There.

ROOT. Well?

GRAHAM. I felt I must see her. So I went upstairs, tripped over a loose board and nearly broke my leg.

GENERAL. Yes, I—(*rubs his injured leg, checks the confession he was going to make*)—heard that. Well, go on.

GRAHAM. I came back here, sat down at the table and—(*mysteriously*)—there I found a wrap. It must have been hers, so I knew that she had been downstairs.

ROOT (*seriously*). The devil you did. What then?

GRAHAM (*sheepishly*). Well I—er—went upstairs to have another shot.

ROOT (*sarcastically*). This is all extremely diverting, Graham. But the question is, where is she now?

GRAHAM. I assure you, sir, I don't know any more than you. A few minutes ago I heard somebody talking French down here—it sounded like Madame's voice—so I lay low, for a bit, and then came down. Who was she talking to? Do you know?

ROOT (*desperately*). She was talking to me. I believe she suspects me of abducting her daughter, and now she has gone to look for an interpreter.

GRAHAM (*blankly*). Suspects you, sir. But how do you come into the matter?

ROOT. I'll tell you. Just as I was getting into bed the baby began to yelp. I should think from its shrieks that somebody had sat on it. Then, to judge by the row, people began to fall downstairs in relays. I thought a cigar might soothe me, came down to get one, fell over that blasted booby trap on the stairs, and hobbled in here on one leg.

(GRAHAM *sniggers and checks himself; the GENERAL is staring straight in front of him, and does not notice it.*)

Then I heard Madame calling her daughter outside, went out to see if I could help in any way, and trod on her in the dark. It was most unfortunate. She said a lot of things I couldn't understand properly, and then went for the interpreter. She seems to think—I don't know what she doesn't think. (*Rises.*) It's enough to make one vow never to show hospitality to a woman again. (*Takes a step or two up stage and then returns to L. side of table, facing GRAHAM. His voice getting stronger.*) And now, Graham, once again I ask you to explain what you mean by causing this horrible disturbance. Do you adhere to this story of yours?

GRAHAM. I do, sir, most emphatically. I give you my most solemn assurance——

ROOT (*irritably*). Well, damn it, man, where can the girl be? She can't have flown out of the window like a bat.

GRAHAM (*a thought striking him*). The window! You've hit it, sir.

(*They both walk up to the window.*)

The window was open when I arrived, and I found her wrap on the table; she must be in the garden. (*Looks out of window.*)

ROOT (*L. side of window*). My dear fellow, what on earth would she be doing in the garden. (*Looks out of window too.*)

GRAHAM (*R. side of window*). Well, perhaps she's gone into the village or——

ROOT (*ponderously*). My good boy, why on earth should a sane woman go to the village at this time of night?

GRAHAM. Well, sir, I know she isn't in her room er—er—(*the GENERAL looks at him sharply*)—at least you say Madame says she isn't; we know she's been down here, because her wrap's on the table.

ROOT. Is it—where?

(GRAHAM comes down R. of table and GENERAL at L. of it. Both to foot of it.)

GRAHAM (*flashing his torch on the table*). Just here. (*He looks.*) Must have fallen on the floor. (*He looks there, kneels down, and flashes his torch-light on floor.*)

(*The GENERAL kneels down too, back view well to audience.*)

Well, that's funny. (*He sinks back on his haunches, unintentionally directing his light on the kneeling form of the GENERAL.*)

ROOT. Who's funny? (*Lifts up his head and glares at GRAHAM.*)

GRAHAM. The scarf's gone. She must have come again and got it. (*Rises.*)

ROOT (*rises, suspiciously*). According to you, she seems to have been coming in and out of this room rather a lot.

GRAHAM. She does.

ROOT. It's not a very probable story, is it?

GRAHAM (*despairingly*). I know it's not, sir. But it's true.

ROOT. You think she's in the garden then?

GRAHAM (*shrugging his shoulders*). Where else can she be?

ROOT. All right. We'll go and see. Come along.

(*They go to window and climb out—GRAHAM stealthily, the GENERAL breathing hard and not paying much heed to his footsteps. He collides violently with a chair.*)

ROOT. Don't make such a damned row, Graham. (*Goes off L. side, followed by GRAHAM.*)

(*GLENISTER comes out from front of desk, also DOROTHY, from top end.*)

GLENISTER. What an escape! (*Hurries her over to staircase.*) Now off to bed with you, and swear you've been asleep in your room all the time.

DOROTHY (*breathlessly*). Yes, Harry. (*About to kiss him.*)

GLENISTER. Quick! there's no time to lose. Some one's bound to barge in here in a second or two.

(*DOROTHY gets on first step of stairs. Cross to stairs.*)

DOROTHY. What about you?

GLENISTER. I'm all right. I'm in my own mess-room. Don't worry about me. Off with you.

(*They snatch a hasty kiss.*)

(*She runs off, up the stairs.*)

(*GLENISTER goes over to window and begins climbing out.*)

ROOT (*from the garden*). Who the devil's that climbing out of the window?

GLENISTER (*despairingly*). Oh, hell!

ROOT (*voice nearer*). Answer me at once. Who is it?

GLENISTER (*getting inside again and backing to staircase*). It's only me, General.

(*ROOT's face appears at the window; he clambers into room, followed by GRAHAM, who gets down L. of couch, and pushes it back to original position as in beginning of act.*)

ROOT (*L. of window*). Now, Glenister, in the name of all that's wonderful—how do you come here?

GLENISTER. Well, sir, I couldn't sleep—— (*Goes down R.*)

ROOT (*coming down L. side of table, ironically*). It seems to me there's an epidemic of insomnia in my Brigade.

GLENISTER. So I came out for a stroll. As I was passing, I—er—noticed the window was open, so I—I thought I'd better come in and make sure the papers were all right.

ROOT (*going close to GRAHAM, significantly*). What did I tell you in the garden? (*They stand whispering together.*)

GRAHAM (*troubled*). Yes, I know. It seems to me——

ROOT. Quiet, quiet.

GLENISTER (*looking at them both*). What's the matter?

ROOT. Hush! (*Comes over to GLENISTER.*) Don't talk too loud. Now, Glenister, first I must compliment you on your astuteness. (*Pats him on the shoulder.*)

GLENISTER (*mystified*). On my astuteness!

ROOT. Yes, it's evident to me that you've suspected the truth all along.

GLENISTER (*agreeing with his adversary hastily*). Oh yes, of course.

ROOT. Well, I've come to the same conclusion. (*Very mysteriously.*) That girl upstairs is not what she pretends to be.

GLENISTER (*with a woeful endeavour to look knowing*). Oh, you think not?

ROOT (*nodding gravely*). I am sure of it. In fact, I am perfectly certain—(*sinking his voice*)—that she is a German spy.

GLENISTER (*horrified and retreating backwards*). What!!!

(*GRAHAM looks thunderstruck.*)

(*Despairingly.*) Oh, this is like some horrible night-mare.

ROOT. Yes, it is!

(*The latch of the door, up stage, clicks.*)

Who's that?

(*They turn to the door which opens and MARNIER is seen entering; he shuts door.*)

ROOT. Who's that, I say?

MARNIER. It's me—Marnier! (*Salutes, stands by door.*)

ROOT (*in astonishment*). Marnier! What are you doing creeping about here at this time of night?

(*GRAHAM lights candles on desk, then gets back to L. of couch.*)

MARNIER (*in an aggrieved tone*). I came to see if you were here. I 'eard voices.

ROOT. Well, here we are. What about it?

MARNIER. I sink somesing is wrong. (*Impressively.*) Zair is somesing vairy mysterious about zat beautiful young lady upstairs. (*He stares at staircase and drops down L. of GENERAL.*)

ROOT (*to GLENISTER*). There, what did I tell you? (*Turns and faces MARNIER again.*)

(MME. DENAUX enters door up stage, with lighted lantern. She puts it on table by door, extinguishes the light, lights her candle and, carrying it, crosses the stage at back, and goes off up the stairs. She does this during MARNIER'S speech.)

MARNIER. To-night zis Madame Denaux comes to my billet and awakening me up to make a complaint. Amongst other things she say zat her daughter is missing. She makes a lot of excuses which I know are false, so I threaten to call ze guard, and after a bit she tell the truth. (*He pauses and sighs.*)

ROOT (*testily*). Well—out with it.

MARNIER (*reluctantly*). Ze truth is zat zis young lady come from Paris and give Madame a large sum of money—1,000 francs—to allow her to pass as her daughter.

ROOT (*testily*). What on earth were the police doing? It's perfectly monstrous! (*Takes a step up stage and back.*)

MARNIER. Zere are no gendarmes here and ze English police take her for a Frenchwoman.

GRAHAM. But she is a Frenchwoman, isn't she?

MARNIER (*shrugging*). As to zat, I cannot say. She is very beautiful. I 'af not spoken to her, perhaps—

ROOT (*interrupting*). Oh, no. She's a spy all right.

GLENISTER. Yes, General, that's all very fine. But—er—what evidence is there?

MARNIER. I 'af just told you, sare. She—

(MME. DENAUX comes to top of stairs carrying lighted candle; she calls to MARNIER.)

MADAME. Monsieur l'interprete!

(MARNIER turns to the GENERAL and says.)

MARNIER. Excuse me.

(And goes to foot of stairs, facing her. The GENERAL goes to GRAHAM, speaks to him, and both turn watching MARNIER. GLENISTER gets close to R. side of table, back to audience, watching too.)

MADAME (*apologetically*). Monsieur, je trouve que ma fille est dans sa chambre!

MARNIER (*sharply*). Votre—quoi?

MADAME (*trying to brazen it out*). Enfin—*Mademoiselle Juliette* est dans sa chambre; elle dort profondement.

MARNIER (*with considerable irritation*). Qu'est-ce que vous dites? Vous en avez du culot, vous, par exemple! C'est ridicule!

MADAME. Je me suis trompée. J'ai pensé qu'elle était sortie—

MARNIER (*scathingly*). Vous avez pensé; vous avez pensé!! Allez pensez dans votre chambre! Je vais dire au Général ce que vous m'avez reconté! Allez! Allez! Allez! Allez! (*the last few words run into each other thus: allez, allez, ALLEZ, ALLEZ.*)

MADAME (*recoiling from him*). Comme vous voudrez, M'sieur ; comme vous voudrez ; comme vous voudrez. . . .

(*She stumbles upstairs and disappears.*)

(MARNIER comes down R. of GLENISTER, who watches him, the GENERAL comes to foot of table L. side, and faces MARNIER, GLENISTER drops down R.C.)

ROOT. Well, Marnier, what's all the fuss about ?

MARNIER. Well, she comes back to say that she find Mademoiselle is not missing, but that she is in her room and fast asleep.

(MARNIER R., GLENISTER R.C., GENERAL L.C., and GRAHAM L. all stand facing audience, each supports his right elbow with the palm of the left hand, their right hands rubbing their chins reflectively, the GENERAL pulling at his moustache.)

ROOT. Um ! We've only her word for that !

(*A slight pause.*)

GRAHAM (*suddenly breaking the silence*). Shall I go up and see, sir ?

ROOT and GLENISTER (*speaking almost together, but the GENERAL speaks first, followed immediately by GLENISTER, who emphasizes his protest with a downward sweep of his fist*). NO !!

(*The GENERAL, surprised at GLENISTER usurping his authority, glares at him.*)

GLENISTER (*humbly and bowing*). Sorry, sir !

ROOT (*to MARNIER*). If she is in her room, Marnier, she'll be safe enough there till the morning. I'm sorry you've been disturbed. Make all the inquiries you can about her, and report to me to-morrow. Good night.

MARNIER. Good night, sir.

(*Salutes and exits door L.*)

ROOT. Whether she is in her room or not, she's evidently been dodging about this house all night. Graham here tracked her by her scarf . . . (*gravely*) I can see the whole thing. She has been into this room, obtained what information she could, and carried it away to her confederates—(*pointing dramatically*)—through—that—window.

GLENISTER (*desperately*). But the papers are all right. I've been through them.

ROOT. You have no imagination, Glenister. Is it likely she would take away the papers and arouse suspicion ? She has taken copies.

(GLENISTER sits and pours himself out some spirit, which he gulps down.)

GRAHAM. I'm quite sure you're mistaken, sir. (*Holly.*) It's unthinkable. (*Sits on couch.*)

ROOT. Graham, you are a child! It is just because it's unthinkable that it's probably true. The spy system of the enemy is notorious.

GLENISTER (*in a dull voice*). What are you going to do, General? (*Rises.*)

ROOT (*crisply*). To-night, nothing. She won't run away.

GRAHAM. We want something a bit more definite, sir, don't we?

ROOT. We don't want to be too hasty. All the same, Glenister, just as a precaution you'd better warn the sentries not to allow any civilian to leave the grounds without a pass. (*Picks his candlestick off the table.*)

GLENISTER (*tonelessly*). Yes, sir. (*Drops down R. corner.*)

(GRAHAM rises.)

ROOT. And I think you fellows had better go out that way. (*Pointing to window.*) Less noisy. (*Walks to foot of stairs.*) Now go to bed, both of you, and mind—not a word of this to a soul. (*Darkly.*) There will be time enough in the morning. Good night.

GLENISTER and GRAHAM. Good night, sir.

(*Exit GENERAL, upstairs.*)

(GLENISTER extinguishes both lamps and GRAHAM extinguishes the candles on desk and goes to window, puts one leg over sill.)

(*See Lighting Plot, cue 6.*)

GRAHAM. Come along, Glenny.

(GLENISTER stands, staring up steps, and takes no notice.)

Glenny—come along. (*Goes out through window.*)

GLENISTER (*mechanically*). Time enough in the morning. (*He sighs heavily, and moves towards the window.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

TIME.—*Next morning.*

SCENE.—*The same.*

The table is being laid for breakfast by JENKS. SYKES is behind desk dusting top of it. Time about 8 a.m. They are discussing the events of the previous night.

JENKS (*bringing dishes from sideboard to table C.R. side of it*). The funniest part was when ole Rooty-Tooty barked his shins on the staircase. I thort I was goin' to bust.

SYKES (*after an endeavour to look stern at the nickname which fails lamentably*). It was a fair treat!

JENKS. An' wot price w'en 'e trod on the ole gal's corns? She didn't 'arf squeal.

SYKES. The General's a 'eavy man for a little 'un.

JENKS. To think of Glenny bein' sich a flyer, too. I allus thort 'im the quiet 'un, but 'e fairly took my breath away.

SYKES. Now go easy with the nicknames, me lad.

JENKS. All rite, Corpul. . . . Well, they allus says the quiet 'uns is the deep 'uns, and they're about rite.

SYKES (*reflectively.—Picks up metal date calendar off desk, and comes round to front of desk*). I must say as I was surprised by the Captain. I wouldn't 'ave believed it of 'im—with the General in the 'ouse, an' all.

JENKS. Well, you was about rite, Corp., w'en you sed there'd be goings on.

SYKES (*darkly*). An' you mark my words, Jenks, it ain't finished yet, not by miles and miles. (*Breathing on frame and vigorously polishing it.*) Did you 'ear what went on after she went upstairs?

JENKS. Nah! I went ter sleep arter 'e'd kissed 'er good night. I knew there wouldn't be no more juicy bits.

SYKES (*didactically*). That's jest where you makes your mistake, Jenks, me lad. You're young and all you wants to 'ear 'is wot you calls the "juicy bits." But when you've 'ad my service you'll know that the things wot is worth 'earin' is always sed when there's no wimmen about. (*Breathes heavily on frame and looking over it at JENKS.*)

JENKS (*gaping*). Is that a fact, Corp.?

SYKES (*patronizingly*). It is, me lad. (*Slight pause to allow this to sink in. Replaces calendar on desk.*)

JENKS. An' wot did you 'ear, Corp.?

SYKES (*comes to head of table. Importantly*). I don't think as the General would like it discussed in the kitchen. But I'll give you a 'int, Jenks—(*throws duster to JENKS, who catches it*)—and no more than a 'int.

JENKS (*eagerly*). Yes.

SYKES. Well, not to put too fine a point on it, you know when she——

(*Steps heard in passage, door L.*)

'Ush! 'ere's some one comin'.

(*They bustle about the table.*)

(*Enter GLENISTER, door L., very white-faced, black under his eyes, etc. He puts his hat on the little table by door and then shuts door. He puts his hand to his head as if it ached.*)

(*SYKES approaches GLENISTER R., and says sympathetically.*) Will you 'ave breakfast now, sir?

GLENISTER (*wearily*). No, thanks, Corporal Sykes. Not just now.

SYKES. A cup of coffee, sir, to freshen yer up?

GLENISTER (*brightening a little*). Yes, I might have that. Will you send it in, please? (*He turns to the desk.*)

(*SYKES picks GLENISTER'S cup off the table and gives it to JENKS, with whispered instructions. JENKS takes the cup, and goes off by the door R., leaving it half open. SYKES goes to head of table and stands by respectfully. GLENISTER is now seated at desk.*)

SYKES. Beg pardon, sir, but you ain't quite the thing this morning, sir. Are you ill, sir?

GLENISTER (*with a ghastly attempt at a smile*). No, I'm all right. I didn't sleep very well—that's all. (*He looks at SYKES doubtfully, and then suddenly resolving to confide in him, rises and stands behind desk.*) Look here, Corporal Sykes, you're a man of experience and discretion.

SYKES (*woodenly*). Yes, sir.

GLENISTER. I think perhaps you could help me. (*Comes down L.C.*)

SYKES. Yes, sir.

GLENISTER. Just close the door, will you?

(*Comes round front of desk, lower end, and stands L.C. facing SYKES, who is standing facing the audience. Each "Yes, sir," of SYKES is said in exactly the same unemotional manner.*)

SYKES. Yes, sir. (*He goes to door R., shuts it, and stands stiffly near it; facing audience.*)

GLENISTER. Now then. First of all—you've seen the young lady upstairs?

SYKES. I 'ave, sir.

GLENISTER. Well, that lady is my wife.

SYKES. Indeed, sir. (*Very slight pause, in even, matter-of-fact voice.*)

GLENISTER. Yes. I'll explain a bit. She came over to meet me in Paris. I couldn't get leave; so, to give me a surprise, she came on here; and persuaded old Madame What's-her-name to pretend she was her daughter.

SYKES. I quite understand, sir.

GLENISTER. Well, you know how strict the rules are about wives and husbands. If it comes out, I should be court-martialled.

SYKES. I know they're very strict, sir.

GLENISTER. They are. Very. Well now, last night there were the most awful complications; and the upshot of it is that the General believes my wife is a spy.

SYKES. Indeed, sir. (*Same even tone.*)

GLENISTER. It's the worst hole I've ever been in in my life. The question is how to put the General off the scent without letting it out that she's Mrs. Glenister. Some day, when it's all blown over, I can explain to him—tell him all about it.

SYKES. Beg pardon, sir. Why not tell Mr. Graham?

GLENISTER (*abruptly*). Certainly not. That's out of the question. (*Turns away towards fireplace, getting to back of couch.*)

SYKES. Excuse me, sir; what's the exact time.

GLENISTER (*surprised by this apparently irrelevant question. He looks at his wrist-watch*). Five past eight, but—

SYKES. Beg pardon, sir, but the General, sir, is *never* down before eight-fifteen—he's punctual to a minute at eight-fifteen. Might I not go up to Madame's room and ask 'er to come down and talk it hover with you, sir? You'd 'ave eight clear minutes, sir.

GLENISTER. What about Mr. Graham? (*Comes L. of SYKES.*)

SYKES (*significantly*). If 'e should come, I hexpect he'd be told as 'ow the Signalling Sergeant wanted to see him, sir; the Signals Officer bein' on leave. (*Smiles.*)

GLENISTER (*smiling too*). All right. Go on. Hurry up.

(*Turns away to foot of couch, then turns and faces SYKES.*)

(*SYKES turns, and gets on first step of stairs.*)

You understand this is strictly confidential, Corporal Sykes?

SYKES. Certainly, sir. (*Goes off up stairs.* GLENISTER *sits on chair L. of table.*)

(JENKS *enters door R., bringing cup of hot coffee—which should steam. He places it on table, does a right about turn, brings his heels together with a click, and shambles off, making characteristic exit. See note in Act I about it.* GLENISTER *stirs the coffee, but can't bring*

himself to drink it. He looks gloomily in front of him. DOROTHY comes down the stairs, looking fresh and bright, and goes to GLENISTER with outstretched hands, which she puts on his shoulders.)

DOROTHY (*as she enters*). Good morning, Harry. So you've told the Corporal who I am?

GLENISTER (*wearily*). Yes, dear.

DOROTHY (*shocked at his appearance*). Harry, my dearest boy, whatever's the matter? Are you ill? (*Kneels beside him, coming round to front of his chair.*)

GLENISTER. No—it's nothing. I didn't sleep very well.

DOROTHY. Poor boy! (*She pets him.*) Dearest! I'm glad you sent for me, I'm awfully sorry, but I'm afraid I'd better go back to Paris and wait for you there.

GLENISTER (*with a kind of groan*). Oh, I only wish to God you could!

DOROTHY. Wish I could! (*Pouting.*) I didn't think you'd be quite so eager to get rid of me. (*Rises and sits on arm of couch.*)

GLENISTER. Get rid of you! My dear, I'd give anything I possess to get rid of you as you call it.

DOROTHY. Oh, Harry, why?

GLENISTER. Dolly, I don't know how I'm going to explain it to you.

DOROTHY (*quickly*). You haven't been worrying again about that stupid Graham boy?

GLENISTER (*irritated*). Good Lord, no! (*Looks at wrist-watch.*) And we've only five minutes. Just listen. It sounds like a nightmare, but—but the General believes—(*rises, goes down to R.*)—it's too awful!

DOROTHY. Believes what, Harry? (*Rises, gets to foot of table.*)

GLENISTER. He believes you're a spy.

DOROTHY (*with a shriek of laughter*). A what? (*Leaning against foot of table.*)

GLENISTER (*hotly*). It's nothing whatever to laugh at. He believes you're a spy.

DOROTHY (*rocking with laughter*). A spy! Oh! Oh! Oh! A spy . . . Oh, Harry, this—(*in gasps*)—is—the funniest thing—that—ever—happened. (*She leans against the table, almost sobbing with laughter.*)

GLENISTER. Stop that idiotic laughing. (*Gets hold of her right hand and "shakes" it.*) We've got to consider it seriously.

DOROTHY (*gasping*). I can't—I can't!

GLENISTER (*sternly*). You must—you must! Don't you realize that you may be court-martialled.

DOROTHY (*still gasping*). I—can't help it—if I am. Where does he think I've been spying, Harry?

GLENISTER (*justifiably incensed*). How on earth do I know?

Dolly, for heaven's sake, pull yourself together. What am I to do ?

DOROTHY. I don't know, old boy.

(GLENISTER looks at her exasperated.)

Harry dear, it's not my fault. I've not been spying, really and truly.
(*She goes off again into weak fits of laughter.*)

GLENISTER. Oh, don't be such a baby, Dorothy ! Do control yourself. (*Walks up to window.*)

DOROTHY (*feebly*). Well, what do you want me to do ? (*Kneels on chair L. of table.*)

GLENISTER (*coming down R. of table. Feebly*). I don't know. I thought you might suggest something.

DOROTHY. Why not tell the General who I really am ?

GLENISTER. Because the very least he would do would be to sack me in disgrace. If it comes to the worst, of course I *shall* tell him.

DOROTHY (*a little anxious*). How do you mean, the worst, dear ?

GLENISTER. Well, if he talks about putting you under arrest or anything.

DOROTHY. He won't do that. (*Crossing L.C.*)

GLENISTER (*comes c. in front of table*). My dear girl, I don't want to frighten you, but that's the very first thing I expect him to do when he gets up.

DOROTHY (*faces him ; sobered at last*). What'll you do if he does ?

GLENISTER. Tell him the truth.

DOROTHY. And what will happen to you ? (*Comes c.*)

GLENISTER. There's no time to bother about that. The thing is to hit on a plan to satisfy the General that you're innocent without giving away who you are.

DOROTHY. Couldn't I find some important papers or something ? (*Turns up stage.*)

GLENISTER (*catching her by the wrist*). What on earth would you do with them if you found them ? Besides, there isn't a paper in this office that a self-respecting spy would give a half-penny to look at. (*Bitterly.*) And in any case he'd say you'd taken copies and were just trying to avert suspicion.

(DOROTHY goes L.C.)

(*Enter SYKES from stairs, quickly.*)

SYKES (*with a discreet cough*). Beg pardon, sir—time's going on, sir. (*Comes down R.*)

GLENISTER (*c., helplessly*). Well, I simply cannot imagine what to do.

SYKES. Beg pardon, sir ; why not tell the General the truth, sir ?

GLENISTER. Because, my good fellow, he'd sack me on the spot. He might even have me court-martialled.

SYKES (R.C., *knowingly*). Ah, if you was to tell him—yes, sir. But why not madam tell him?

DOROTHY (L.C., *grasping the distinction at once*). Oh, Corporal, I think you've got it! (*Crosses R.C. to Corporal.*)

GLENISTER. I don't see what difference it makes. (*Gets L.C.*)

DOROTHY (*turns to GLENISTER, and goes to him L.C.*). Oh, it makes all the difference in the world. I can tell him—it's true—that I couldn't exist without seeing you. That you knew nothing about it. That we've only been married a few months and—and——

SYKES (*woodenly, and marking off each point on his fingers*). That you're very young, mum—and didn't mean to do no 'arm—and the Captain's afraid 'e'll be angry—but you know 'e's far too kind-'earted to blame a woman for taking a risk to see 'er husband.

(DOROTHY faces SYKES as he speaks.)

DOROTHY. Splendid.

GLENISTER (*who hates the idea of being screened*). I don't like it. I'd much sooner see him myself and say I planned it all.

(DOROTHY turns to GLENISTER during this.)

DOROTHY. And tell a pack of lies and get into an awful row, when, ten to one, the truth will get us out of the whole mess. How stupid you are, Harry. (*With decision.*) It's the only way. I'll do it.

GLENISTER. But——

SYKES (*interrupting warningly*). 'Scuse me, sir, but if madam doesn't hurry she'll meet the General and then it'll be all up.

DOROTHY. I'm off.

(Exit DOROTHY quickly upstairs.)

GLENISTER (*helplessly*). But I don't know when she'll be able to see the General. (*Comes C.*)

SYKES (*as though the GENERAL were his own personal property*). Leave that to me, sir, if you please, sir. (*Spoken all in one breath. He goes to door R.*)

GLENISTER (*wearily*). Oh, all right. (*He sits at table, L. of it.*)

SYKES. Will you take your breakfast now, sir?

GLENISTER. Oh, yes—anything.

SYKES (*goes to door R., opens it, calls off to JENKS, leaves door open*). Bring the Captain's breakfast.

GLENISTER. I don't want much.

SYKES (*sympathetically*). No, sir. (*Signs to JENKS off. Then up to sideboard to top end of it.*)

(Enter GRAHAM, door L. up stage. He also is white-faced and obviously has not slept. He flings his hat on top of the desk and goes gloomily to the table, leaning on his arms over the arm chair.)

GLENISTER (*dismally*). Mornin'. (*Staring in front of him, head on hands.*)

GRAHAM (*equally dismally*). Mornin', Glenny.

(*Enter JENKS, door R., with covered dish—full of steaming hot water for representation of hot "scrambled eggs"—he puts it on sideboard and goes off door R., shutting it after him.*)

SYKES (*to GRAHAM*). Will you 'ave your breakfast now, sir.

GRAHAM (*irritably*). Oh, curse the breakfast! No, I don't want any. I didn't sleep very well. (*Smooths his hair with his hands.*) What are you going to have, Glenny?

SYKES (*standing at side of sideboard temptingly*). There's tinned fresh 'errings, sir; very good scrambled eggs—(*Enumerating the things on sideboard. He lifts up the dish-cover when he says "Very good scrambled eggs" and replaces it*)—toast, marmalade, no porridge this morning, sir.

GRAHAM. You make me shudder. Don't talk of all that food at once.

SYKES. No, sir. (*Comes R. of GRAHAM.*) Will you try an Indian pick-me-up, sir? Very appetising after a bad night.

GRAHAM. What kind of pick-me-up?

SYKES. Indian pick-me-up, sir. Very delicious. (*Telling off each item on his fingers.*) Raw egg, Worcester Sauce, salt, pepper, mustard—(*makes action as if pouring out of a bottle*)—and just a dash of liqueur brandy, sir, to give it a bite.

GRAHAM. I think I'll try that.

SYKES. Yessir.

(*Exit SYKES, off door R.*)

(*Short pause.*)

GRAHAM. Glenny, I give you my word. I haven't slept a wink. (*Comes down to R. side of table and sits.*)

GLENISTER (*waking up to sitting position. Shortly*). Oh! why not?

GRAHAM (*wrathfully*). You ghoul! I believe you've absolutely no heart at all. Why not? Why, for thinking of that sweet little girl upstairs and the General's spy-mania. (*Earnestly.*) I'd give everything I possess to be able to help her.

GLENISTER (*dryly*). I expect that'll comfort her a lot.

GRAHAM (*savagely*). Now don't be funny, Glenister. It isn't a subject to joke about. (*Wretchedly.*) Why, the whole's thing's my fault.

GLENISTER (*in surprise*). Your fault?

GRAHAM. Of course it is. Poor little thing. (*Leans forward, facing audience.*) Like a swine, I went and gave it away about her scarf. She came down to meet me—(*Very dreamily.*)

(*GLENISTER hides a smile behind his hand.*)

And—and—I missed her, somehow, and then blurted it all out to the General when he was cursing me. (*Suspiciously.*) What the blazes are you laughing at?

GLENISTER (*coughing violently*). I'm not laughing, old chap.

GRAHAM. Yes, you are. (*Rises.*) You believe she's a spy too—(*leans over table, and rates him*) you believed it all along—coming back here after mess like a ruddy private detective and getting patted on the back for your astuteness. Damn your astuteness! (*Goes down R. violently.*) She's not a spy, I tell you. (*Swings round, glaring at GLENISTER.*)

GLENISTER (*rising, flaring up*). Damn it, Graham, I never said she was. And don't you talk to me like that. (*Advances c.*)

GRAHAM. Well, then—— (*Comes c. They face each other angrily.*)

GLENISTER (*sharply, asserting his seniority*). That'll do. Just calm yourself down. Don't worry. It'll all blow over. (*Goes down L. GRAHAM goes R.*)

(*The GENERAL enters from stairs. The GENERAL also looks drawn and ill.*)

ROOT (*gruffly*). What'll blow over, Glenister

GLENISTER. The clouds outside, sir.

ROOT. Clouds outside? (*Looking at window.*) Why it's brilliant sunshine.

GLENISTER. Then they've blown over already.

(*GLENISTER sits on couch. GRAHAM goes to foot of stairs, looks up, and then goes to window seat, sits, and buries his face in his hands.*)

(*ROOT sits at table, c.*)

(*GLENISTER is leaning forward holding his head in his hands; GRAHAM does the same; the GENERAL has his head almost lying on his arms on the table. They are the picture of wretchedness. A slight pause. SYKES enters door R., stands irresolute as he sees them all, then plucks up courage to break the silence. When he speaks they all come to life, guiltily.*)

SYKES. Will you take breakfast now, sir?

ROOT (*testily*). No! I don't think I want much breakfast this morning. I—I didn't sleep very well.

GLENISTER (*freshening up*). Very good scrambled eggs, General.

(*SYKES gets on R. side of GENERAL.*)

ROOT (*snappishly*). I dare say, Glenister, I dare say. I don't want any, all the same—er—I'll have a cup of coffee, Corporal Sykes.

SYKES. Coffee, sir? Very good, sir. (*About to go, turns and comes to GENERAL R. of him.*) Will you try an Indian pick-me-up, sir? Very sustaining.

ROOT (*suspiciously*). How is it made?

SYKES (*in the tone of an artist, repeating finger and pouring business as before*). Indian pick-me-up, sir? Raw egg, Worcester Sauce, salt, pepper, mustard, and just a dash——

ROOT (*violently*). Stop! Stop! You're making me sick. Go away and get my coffee at once.

SYKES. Yes, sir. (*Picks up the GENERAL's coffee cup, and takes it off with him through door R.*) Very good, sir.

ROOT (*nervously*). Anything—er—arrived from Division yet, Glenister?

GLENISTER (*looking up in slight alarm*). No, General. Nothing yet. Why? Have you? . . . (*Rises.*)

ROOT (*grimly*). I'm expecting a memo. from the General.

(*Re-enter CORPORAL SYKES with coffee, which he gives to ROOT.*)

SYKES (*as he hands it*). Your coffee, sir.

ROOT. Thank you—all right. You needn't wait.

SYKES. Beg pardon, sir. But the young lady of the 'ouse, sir, would like to speak to you.

ROOT (*undecidedly*). I don't think I ought to see her just now—with this business to be cleared up. What do you think, Glenister?

GLENISTER. Well, sir——

ROOT (*interrupting*). No, I'd better not.

SYKES (*coldly*). Yes, sir. (*To stairs.*) Shall I tell her, sir?

ROOT. Oh, drat the girl. No—she may have something to say, that—— Here—(*turns round in his chair to GRAHAM when he says "Here."*)——

(*GRAHAM springs up to attention, then the GENERAL changes his mind, and addresses GLENISTER. GRAHAM sits again, disappointedly.*)

Glenister, you've finished breakfast—you go and see what she wants.

(*GLENISTER gets up level with the GENERAL, L. side of him.*)

GLENISTER. Me, sir?

ROOT (*irritably*). Yes—you, sir. What on earth's the matter?

GLENISTER (*hurriedly*). Nothing. Nothing whatever. (*Crosses behind GENERAL to stairs, calling "Corporal Sykes" as he passes him.*)

(*Exit GLENISTER, followed by SYKES up the stairs. GRAHAM rises, gets down L.*)

ROOT (*to GRAHAM*). There are times when I can't help thinking that Glenister has something on his mind. (*Rises, gets down to R. end of couch.*)

GRAHAM. I think he's a bit overworked. He's certainly been queer this last couple of days.

ROOT. I shall send him on leave to Paris as soon as we get settled down. His wife is there, you know.

(Enter MARNIER from door L. looking tired and worn ; he gets to head of table.)

GRAHAM (*uneasily*). I wonder why Mademoiselle wanted to see you ?

ROOT (*ignoring the question and addressing MARNIER in a tone of irritation*). Hullo ! What on earth do you want ?

MARNIER (*surprised*). I 'af come to tell ze result of ze inquiries which you are telling me to make !

ROOT. What inquiries ?

MARNIER. About ze beautiful young lady upstairs. (*Comes down R. of table, looking up at stairs as he speaks.*)

ROOT (*with interest*). Oh—yes. . . . Well, what about her ?

MARNIER (*speaks against his will but with a strong sense of military duty*).

(NOTE.—MARNIER must make it clear by his acting that he, too, is captivated by DOROTHY, and that he hates giving evidence against her.)

Well, it is terrible ! I 'af just look carefully at some circulars issued by ze French Authorities regarding espionage, and zere I read about a certain woman spy who is believe to be in ze British Area. (*Comes to foot of table.*)

ROOT. Well ? (*Sits on arm of couch R. end, supports his right elbow on left arm, and pulls at his moustache.*)

MARNIER. Zen I turn up ze British Intelligence memoranda and zere I find a description of zis same spy publish less than a month ago. (*Draws a typewritten circular from his right coat pocket.*)

ROOT (*testily*). Well, come along, man—sit down, and tell us who she is.

MARNIER (*sits on chair R. of table. Impressively*). Her name is Olga Erzberger. (*He pauses, lowers the paper, sighs, and looks round at staircase.*)

ROOT. Damn it, man, get on with it !

(MARNIER *hastily swings round and gets busy with the circular.*)

MARNIER. I will read . . . (*Reads.*) “The notorious Olga Erzberger. This well-known spy, whose real name is still a mystery, is known by the above name as it is the one which she has, so far as it is known, held longest, this being the name she adopted during the two years in which she acted as confidential secretary to the Under-Secretary of State for European affairs.” (*To GENERAL.*) You see ?

ROOT. Well, that doesn't tell us very much.

MARNIER. Ah, I am coming to it. (*Reads again.*) “In appearance she is a very beautiful young woman of about 25 years.” (*Lowers his paper, turns to look at stairs again and says : “Hélas ! Oh, la la !”*)

(*The GENERAL rounds him up sharply.*)

ROOT. Confound it, man, what's the matter with you ?

(MARNIER *returns to the business in hand.*)

MARNIER. "Height five feet, six inches. Hair and complexion fair. Face oval. Features regular. No distinguishing marks."

ROOT. Um! That seems to tally!

MARNIER. Oh, I am afraid zere is no doubt. (*Reads.*) "She is particularly dangerous in localities where many young officers are to be found—"

(GRAHAM *takes a step forward.*)

—as her fascination is such that she is quite irresistible and can obtain any information she wishes from her victims."

GRAHAM. Oh no!

ROOT (*glaring at him*). What do you mean "Oh no!" . . . Go on, Marnier.

MARNIER. Oh, zis is all very bad. (*Reads.*) "One of her commonest plans of action is to settle down in a small village close to the scene of her operations, where to avert suspicion she obtains employment with one of the villagers. It is known that this most dangerous woman is now in our area and all ranks are warned to be on their guard against her." (*He folds up the paper sadly, rises, and goes down R.*)

ROOT (*dubiously*). That sounds very convincing, Marnier, but what puzzles me, is what she could hope to gain by coming here. Why, man, we're not worth spying on. A Brigade resting out of the line! And certainly not worth the while of a master spy like Olga what's-her-name.

MARNIER (*comes to foot of table resignedly*). I shall explain zat, too. (*Impressively.*) Vat is four miles away on ze Bogusvillers—(*pronounced "Bogusveeyer"*)—road?

(*The GENERAL gives a bewildered glance at GRAHAM, who avoids it, and gazes at the ceiling.*)

ROOT (*shaking his head*). I don't know, I'm sure.

MARNIER. It 'eese ze village of Machinchose—(*pronounced "Mash-an-shows"*)—Army Head-quarters.

GRAHAM. By Gad! So it is.

MARNIER (*with growing force*). Vat is three kilometres to the north?

(*Again the GENERAL looks at GRAHAM and again GRAHAM avoids the glance.*)

ROOT (*testily*). Well, what is it?

MARNIER. The important railway junction at Longpré, where they regulate all military trains preceeding to the forward area.

GRAHAM (*goggle-eyed*). Good Lord!

MARNIER (*in louder voice still*). Vat is two miles—

ROOT. Blast it, stop firing these questions at my head and get on with the story.

MARNIER (*subdued*). Vair good, sare. Two miles away you haf ze aerodrome and ze wireless station. Just on ze other side of ze river is a large branch of ze Mission Française. Zis is ze most central spot of them all.

ROOT (*slowly*). Then your idea is that she took up her abode here. . . .

MARNIER. To avoid suspicion. Of course. She lives at ze Brigadier's billet. . . .

(*Re-enter GLENISTER, from stairs, he comes down R.*)

So she must be *above* suspicion.

ROOT. Well, let's hope she is. Now then, Glenister, what's it all about ?

(MARNIER goes up to window and looks out. GRAHAM remains standing down L.)

GLENISTER (R.C., *who has been primed by DOROTHY and CORPORAL SYKES in what he has to say*). She seems to have a sort of confession to make, General. I don't think she's—er—quite what . . . (*Awkward pause.*)

ROOT (*significantly, slapping his knees*). That settles it. (*Rises, goes to GLENISTER.*) Do you know who she is ?

GLENISTER (*awkwardly*). Well, I've a sort of—er—sort of idea.

ROOT. You've looked up the circular, too, then ?

GLENISTER (*perplexed out of his wits*). No, sir, I haven't seen any circular.

ROOT. Well, how the deuce did you know ?

GLENISTER (*trying to look knowing and failing miserably*). Ah, that's it, General—how did I ?

(THE GENERAL turns his head round very slowly, and looks at GRAHAM, then faces GLENISTER.)

ROOT (*perplexed*). Well, dash me if I can make head or tail of this. However, if you know, you know, and that's all about it.

GLENISTER (*unable to believe his ears*). Excuse me, General, but—er—do you know who she is then ?

ROOT. Of course I do ! We all do !

GLENISTER (*penitently*). Well, I really don't know what to say, sir—I don't really—I mean—of course it's very hard to make allowances—and I feel I've no right—no right to—er—to ask you—er, to try and understand, but—great temptations, you know—
(*His voice dies miserably away.*)

(THE GENERAL again turns slowly to GRAHAM, then drawing himself up, faces GLENISTER.)

ROOT (*slowly*). Glenister—(*pause.*)—have you gone off your head ?

GLENISTER (*confusedly*). But I—I—I thought you said you knew.

ROOT. But we do know. (*Goes to GRAHAM down L.*)

GLENISTER. But *what* do you know? And *how* do you know?

ROOT. Why, Marnier—

GLENISTER (*putting his hand to his head*). Marnier? I think I *must* be going mad. (*Goes to R. corner.*) What has Marnier got to do with it?

(MARNIER comes to head of table L. end.)

ROOT (*testily*). Found out who she is, of course!

GLENISTER (*feebly*). Found out? Then who is she?

ROOT. Why, damn it, you said you knew a minute ago.

GLENISTER. I know I did. (*Advance to chair R. of table.*) But, tell me who Marnier thinks she is. (*Anxiously.*) I must know. (*Faces MARNIER.*)

MARNIER. Zinks? Zere is no zinks. She is ze notorious Olga Erzberger, ze spy, and I, Jules Marnier, 'af discover it. (*Turns to desk, and is joined there by GRAHAM.*)

(GLENISTER collapses into the chair R. of table.)

ROOT. Well, I had some doubts about it this morning, so I wrote privately to the Divisional General to get his advice. (*Comes L.C.*)

GLENISTER (*rising. Aghast*). You wrote to the Divisional General.

ROOT. Yes, just to be on the safe side. But of course there's only one thing to do now. We must apprehend her at once and send her to Head-quarters.

GLENISTER (*at table R. of it, facing GENERAL. Making a last effort*). General, I implore you not to act too hastily. I feel sure there's a mistake somewhere.

ROOT. Mistake? But you said yourself you knew who she was. Not quite what she pretended to be, or something.

GLENISTER. Yes, yes, I know; but she's not Olga Thingamajig—I'm positive.

ROOT (*getting cross*). Well, who the devil is she, then?

GLENISTER (*in confusion, goes down R.C.*). Well, I think she's English.

ROOT. English? (*Goes over to GLENISTER.*)

(GRAHAM and MARNIER show great interest and come down stage.

GRAHAM to head of couch, and MARNIER above him.)

GLENISTER. Yes.

ROOT. English? Then what on earth is she doing here?

GLENISTER. Well, sir, I think she's married.

(GRAHAM gives at the knees, and supports himself on the back of the couch. MARNIER throws up his hands with a gesture of despair.)

ROOT. Married? what's that got to do with it?

GLENISTER. Well, there's her husband, you see.

ROOT (*imitating his voice—irritably*). Of course "there's her husband, you see," if she's married! (*In his own voice, angrily.*) I'm not a fool, am I?

GLENISTER. Well, I think she's come out here to see him, and—er—er—so far as I can make it out, adopted this—er, this extremely foolhardy expedient in order to see her husband.

ROOT. Well, let's hope he's worth it. (*Goes up to L. side of table, facing GRAHAM.*) But what an incredible tale! Dodging the police and bribing this old woman and everything. (*Walks up stage and back again to L. side of table then faces GLENISTER.*) Now I ask you, Glenister, do you believe it yourself? Why, damme man, she didn't even talk like an English girl. She'd better tell all this to the Division. . . .

GLENISTER. Well, she can talk English all right now.

MARNIER (*comes down L. of GENERAL*). Olga Erzberger can talk ze English language parfaitement.

GRAHAM (*interrupting*). Shut up, Marnier. Don't you interfere.

ROOT (*testily*). Now then, Graham, don't start putting in your oar.

GLENISTER. Well, sir, if you ask my candid opinion, I believe her story. The best way would be if you'd see her privately—

MARNIER (*warningly*). Zis Olga Erzberger—

GRAHAM (*menacingly*). Will you shut up?

ROOT (*at the top of his voice*). Do be quiet, Graham.

(GRAHAM goes in front of couch, striding angrily across the fireplace, he stands with his back to them, straddles his legs, puts his hand behind his back, gives one swift look at them over his right shoulder, and stands gazing into the fire.)

Now, what is it, Marnier?

MARNIER. Zis Olga Erzberger is a vair desperate character to see privately.

ROOT. Oh, rubbish! You don't imagine I'm afraid of a woman, do you?

MARNIER. Still, ze circular say she is a vair dangerous person.

ROOT (*snapping his head off*). Kindly talk sense if you want to talk at all. (MARNIER goes a step or two to L.C.) Now, Glenister, you want me to see her privately.

MARNIER (*returning to L. of GENERAL*). Pardon, sir, you misunderstand me. I do not mean she will attack you—I mean she might give a false account of ze interview afterwards.

ROOT. I don't think there's much in that. Still, to be on the safe side, Glenister, you'd better stay with me while I interview her.

(GLENISTER gives a despairing glance round the room.)

You others might go out for a few minutes.

(GRAHAM goes to desk, and gets his hat, and puts it on.)

MARNIER. Vair good, sir. (*Salutes and exits door L.*)

ROOT. Graham, tell Corporal Sykes to show the lady in.

GRAHAM. Yes, sir. (*Salutes and goes off upstairs.*)

ROOT (*walks across stage to far end of couch, and back to c.* GLENISTER down R.). She's waiting on the landing, isn't she? (*Goes to R. end of couch.*)

GLENISTER (*miserably*). Yes.

(GRAHAM comes down the stairs briskly, and goes across stage at back, and out of door L., which he closes quietly. SYKES comes down the stairs, stands at the foot of them, says his line and goes out at door R., shutting it after him. DOROTHY comes down slowly, and stands for a moment at the foot of the stairs. She sees GLENISTER and instinctively extends her hand to him. He responds and advances a step to her. Then they both remember the GENERAL'S presence and stop in confusion.)

SYKES. The lady to see you, sir.

(*Exit SYKES, down R.*)

ROOT (*amazed*). Why, bless my soul. What's this? (*He has observed instinctive movement towards each other.*)

GLENISTER (*taking her hand and leading her forward c.*). My wife, sir.

ROOT (*hands on hips and bending backwards*). Glenister—(*pauses*)—I've felt for some time that you're going mad. . . . Your wife? Your wife's in Paris waiting for you to go on leave.

GLENISTER. No, sir. My wife is here.

ROOT (*as the truth dawns on him. He speaks sternly and quietly, and after a pause*). I see. The young English woman who adopted this expedient in order to see her husband. You are the husband. (*Very severely.*) Glenister, I didn't expect this from you. It's bad discipline. It's flagrant. It's flat disobedience of Army Orders. It's a court martial offence. (*Walks up stage and down again, remaining by L. side of table.*) Oh, damn it all, Glenister, why couldn't you tell me this before? Here I've written a private memorandum to the Divisional General about it—and now she's your wife all the time.

GLENISTER (*helplessly*). I—I—

DOROTHY (*leaves GLENISTER and faces GENERAL*). You'd have been angry. He'd have got into fearful trouble.

ROOT. Trouble? Trouble? Nothing to the trouble we shall all get into now. (*Walks down to foot of couch, he pauses a moment, then sits.*) (*Brokenly.*) Glenister, I don't know what to do with you. What have you got to say?

(GLENISTER advances to speak, DOROTHY checks him.)

DOROTHY (*quickly*). He's got nothing to say. He knew nothing about it. It was my idea entirely.

GLENISTER. Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Don't interrupt, Harry. (*She makes signs to HARRY to leave the room.*)

(*He goes by R. of table to head of it, and waits there.*)

General Root, you're a bachelor, or you might be able to feel for me a bit. (*She signs again to GLENISTER to go.*)

(GLENISTER *tip-toes to the door L. and exits, closing door.*)

When I got to Paris after looking forward to finding Harry there and got his letter saying his leave was postponed, I nearly went mad. I had to see him, so I came here. (*At foot of table.*)

ROOT. My dear lady, if you had only waited a few days you'd have got him without all this unpleasantness.

DOROTHY. Waited! (*Crossing over to back of couch.*) Don't you understand, General, that the whole life of a woman in this awful war is summed up in the one word waiting? Waiting for letters; waiting for your man to get leave; waiting for a dreadful day—(*she gulps and dries up*)—you know it's bound to come. (*Crosses to table c.*) Waiting, waiting, waiting and a time comes when you feel you can't wait—(*pause*)—any longer.

(*The GENERAL draws out his handkerchief from his sleeve, and furtively blows his nose, then replaces his handkerchief.*)

ROOT (*prosaically*). My dear Mrs. Glenister—if we had been in the line you'd have *had* to wait longer.

DOROTHY. Then I shouldn't have been expecting Harry in Paris. I was keyed up with waiting. . . . Naturally I lost my balance. (*Gets to R. side of table.*)

ROOT (*rises, comes to L. side of table, facing her*). It's all very well your trying to make black appear white, but you don't seem quite to realize what a serious matter it is. You've done a most imprudent thing; you've risked getting your husband court martialled—and as for *me*—— (*Sits in chair L. of table with a gesture of despair.*)

DOROTHY (*hotly*). I've already told you he had nothing to do with it. (*By chair R. of table.*)

ROOT. Eh? What's that? (*Turns and faces her.*) When did he first know you were here?

DOROTHY (*with emphasis*). Yesterday morning. He had no idea whatever, till I came in here yesterday morning while you were out.

ROOT. Then it was his duty to inform me at once and take the necessary steps to have you sent back to Paris immediately. Instead of that, he connived at the deception.

DOROTHY (*abashed*). I didn't understand that.

ROOT. No, but *he* did. He knew perfectly well what his duty was. Just as I know mine now. (*Rises.*)

DOROTHY (*getting a little nervous*). And what is that?

ROOT. To put you both under arrest; have him court martialled and you handed over to the Civilian Police.

DOROTHY (*anxiously*). And are you going to do it? (*Sinks slowly into chair R. of table.*)

ROOT. I don't see how I can help doing it.

DOROTHY (*aghast*). What? (*Jumps up.*) You're going to ruin my husband's career and expose me to arrest and disgrace just because we care enough for each other—(*passionately*)—to stamp on your stupid official regulations. (*Bitterly.*) How noble! And you belong to an army which prides itself on its chivalry. (*Turns away to R.*)

ROOT (*banging the table with his fist—and almost shouting in his annoyance and discomfiture*). But confound it all, madam, don't you understand that I've written to the Divisional General about it? You and your husband between you have made a perfect fool of me. (*Goes down to foot of couch.*) Why, the preposterous events of last night may even come out. (*Sits on couch.*)

DOROTHY (*breathing heavily and coming in front of table*). And I promise you, faithfully, General, that if you get Harry into a row, I'll take jolly good care that they do come out. (*Crosses L.C.*)

ROOT (*thunderstruck*). What? (*Springing up.*)

DOROTHY (*with the light of battle in her eye and advancing to him*). I will. I will. How you squeezed my hand under the table—(*pause*)—and everything.

ROOT (*hotly*). Well, of all the base ingratitude——!

DOROTHY (*interrupting hysterically*). I don't care—if you're going to hurt Harry, I shall do my best to hurt you. (*Turns away to R. end of table foot.*)

ROOT (*tartly; coming up to her*). Good heavens, madam—do try and be reasonable. Is it likely that I want to hurt your husband? He's my right-hand man.

DOROTHY. Then why make all this fuss? It's not his fault. You can't blame him. (*Below table.*)

ROOT. I don't. I blame you.

DOROTHY. That's quite right. It's my fault. I admit it—isn't that enough?

ROOT (*exasperated*). Really, Mrs. Glenister, you can't go and fly in the face of the army and then expect every one to be satisfied if you say—(*trying to imitate her voice*)—"That's quite right—it's my fault—I admit it." (*Speaks in his natural voice.*) Between the pair of you, you've broken enough regulations to Stellenbosch a commander-in-chief, let alone a brigade major. (*Walks up stage, round back of table, and comes down R.*) You've dodged the police, bribed this wretched landlady, passed under an assumed name. . . .

DOROTHY. Well, what if I have? (*Moves L.C.*)

ROOT. And now, when you're found out and the thing's practically out of my hands, you threaten to drag me into it, too.

DOROTHY. Not if you'll hush it up.

ROOT (*groaning*). How can I hush it up? The Brigade interpreter has proved conclusively that you're Olga somebody or other,

a German spy—and at any moment I shall get a letter from the Division telling me what to do with you.

DOROTHY (*dismally*). Oh, General—is there no way out of it?

ROOT (*shortly*). No, there is not.

DOROTHY. What will they do to Harry? (*Below couch.*)

ROOT (*grimly*). They'll certainly kick him out of the Division—he'll be lucky if they don't cashier him—and I shall stand a jolly good chance of losing my brigade.

DOROTHY (*breaking down at last*). Oh, I'm—I'm most awfully sorry. (*Sinks into couch.*)

ROOT (*awkwardly*). Well, it's no good crying about it. (*He looks away.*)

DOROTHY (*furtively dabbing her eyes*). I'm not crying—(*sniff*)—I'm only—(*gulp*)—most awfully tired.

(*She collapses, crying miserably. The GENERAL stands helplessly looking at her and combing his moustache with his fingers. After a moment or two he walks irresolutely towards her, decides he can't risk breaking down himself, and goes up L. side of table towards window.*)

ROOT (*with gruff kindliness*). Come, pull yourself together, Mrs. Glenister. Don't give way.

DOROTHY. I'm all right. (*Quavering.*) Really!

ROOT (*turning suddenly, and coming to head of arm-chair*). Have you had any breakfast?

DOROTHY. No. (*Unhappily.*) I don't want any.

ROOT. Oh, that's nonsense. (*Goes to door R., opens it, leaves it open, and then comes to R. side of table after calling for SYKES. Calling.*) Corporal Sykes. (*To her.*) You must have something to eat—no wonder you're overstrung.

(*Enter SYKES.*)

Corporal Sykes, get Mrs. Glenister some breakfast.

(*Goes up R. side of table to head of arm-chair on which he leans, making signs of approval to SYKES as he suggests various articles of food.*)

SYKES. Yes, sir! (*To DOROTHY.*) What will you 'ave, madam? (*Goes to sideboard.*) There's some nice tinned fresh 'errings, eggs, bacon, coffee, toast, preserves—the 'errings is quite palatable, mum.

DOROTHY. I—I don't want anything.

ROOT (*kindly*). Yes, you do.

SYKES (*temptingly*). A nice little dish of buttered heggs, mum—extremely light and very sustaining.

DOROTHY (*dubiously*). Yes?

SYKES (*seductively*). And a nice 'ot cup of coffee, mum.

DOROTHY (*with an attempt at brightness*). Very well, Corporal. I leave it entirely to you. (*Rises, goes to fireplace.*)

SYKES. Yes, mum. Thank you, mum. (*To door R.*) Ready in a few minutes, mum.

(*Exit SYKES R. closing door.*)

(*Enter GLENISTER, door L. anxiously with a big O.H.M.S. envelope in his hand. He advances to L. side of GENERAL.*)

(*As the GENERAL takes the letter there is quite a pause, and the GENERAL looks GLENISTER squarely in the face. GLENISTER drops his eyes, thoroughly ashamed of his share in the plot.*)

GLENISTER (*handing the large envelope to ROOT*). From Divisional Head-quarters, sir.

ROOT (*taking it, with sarcastic thanks*). Thank you, Glenister. (*He dwells a long time on the "Thank."*)

(*GLENISTER stands respectfully to one side. The GENERAL, with letter, walks down to R., GLENISTER to window.*)

DOROTHY (*coming in front of couch, eagerly*). Is that the answer to your letter?

ROOT (*dismally, fixing on his glasses to read it*). Yes, here it is. "Secret." (*Bitterly.*) This will tell me to apprehend you, Mrs. Glenister, as Olga what's-her-name, the spy, and send you to Divisional Head-quarters; and then the whole infernal tomfoolery will come out, I shall be the laughing-stock of the Army, your husband will be sent home in disgrace, and—oh, let's know the worst.

(*He goes to R. side of table, sits in chair, opens letter, tosses aside an enclosed letter, and reads the memo.*)

Hello! Now I wonder—— Good heavens!

GLENISTER (*comes down R. side of him. Anxiously*). What is it, General?

ROOT (*reading*). "I am directed to inform you that Major-General Dance having been evacuated to the Base owing to ill-health, you have been appointed to take command temporarily of the Division—Authority Corps Order No. 772, para. 9. I am etc."——

GLENISTER (*relieved*). Saved, by Jingo! (*Goes down R.*)

ROOT (*looks up at GLENISTER. Grimly*). You think so, do you?

(*GLENISTER collapses.*)

(*Rises.*) What's this? (*Lifts up letter he tossed aside.*) My letter returned unopened. A note from Jevons: "I am returning your private letter to the General, as he has gone sick."

DOROTHY (*excitedly, comes L. of table*). Yes, but who's Jevons, and what, oh, what does it all mean?

GLENISTER. Jevons is G.S.O.I. (*The I. is pronounced "one."*)

DOROTHY. Oh, do talk English.

ROOT (*severely*). Colonel Jevons, Mrs. Glenister, is a General Staff Officer, first grade.

DOROTHY (*uncomprehendingly*). Oh, is he? Really! But what does it all mean?

ROOT (*severely*). It means that you've got to reckon with *me* now. (*Comes round foot of table to her.*)

DOROTHY (*taken aback*). Oh!

ROOT (*grimly*). It means that *I* am now the Divisional General.

(GLENISTER goes up stage to back, by window.)

DOROTHY (*in a tone of relief*). Oh, then everything's all right. (*Goes L.*)

ROOT (*ironically*). Is it? (*Comes L.C. mildly.*) A few minutes ago I think you used certain threats.

DOROTHY (*making a last effort*). General Root, it's been a very trying morning for me, and I'm sure a great soldier like you will make allowances for a woman's feelings. (*Pleadingly.*) Can't you understand that I was nearly mad with anxiety.

ROOT (*dryly*). Was?

DOROTHY (*firmly*). Yes, *was*. I'm not anxious now, because—because a woman's instinct always tells her whom she can trust—and I trust you.

ROOT (*completely taken aback*). Well, really—of all the—— (*Checks himself.*)

DOROTHY (*anxiously*). Well?

ROOT (*dryly*). Oh, nothing. . . . Nothing that need be said, anyhow.

DOROTHY. Then you *do* understand? I knew you would. (*Wheedling him.*) And you'll be kind to us?

ROOT (*dryly*). By Gad, you deserve it, don't you?

DOROTHY (*humbly*). No, we don't. But a giant should use his strength like a giant. (*Pause.*) Oh, *do* be a giant, General Root.

ROOT (*precisely*). Mrs. Glenister, you plead your case with extraordinary skill—and your husband himself shall judge it.

(GLENISTER comes down to foot of table coming to attention with a click of the heels.)

I am a plain soldier, and my duty is perfectly clear. Although this imprudence has by great fortune had no serious results, it is a gross breach of discipline. Do you agree, Glenister?

GLENISTER (*quietly*). Yes, General, entirely.

ROOT (*addressing GLENISTER*). That being so, the question is, can I let it pass?

GLENISTER (*as before*). No, sir.

ROOT (*to DOROTHY*). You see?

DOROTHY (*faintly and tearfully*). Well, what are you going to do? (*Turns away to hide her tears.*)

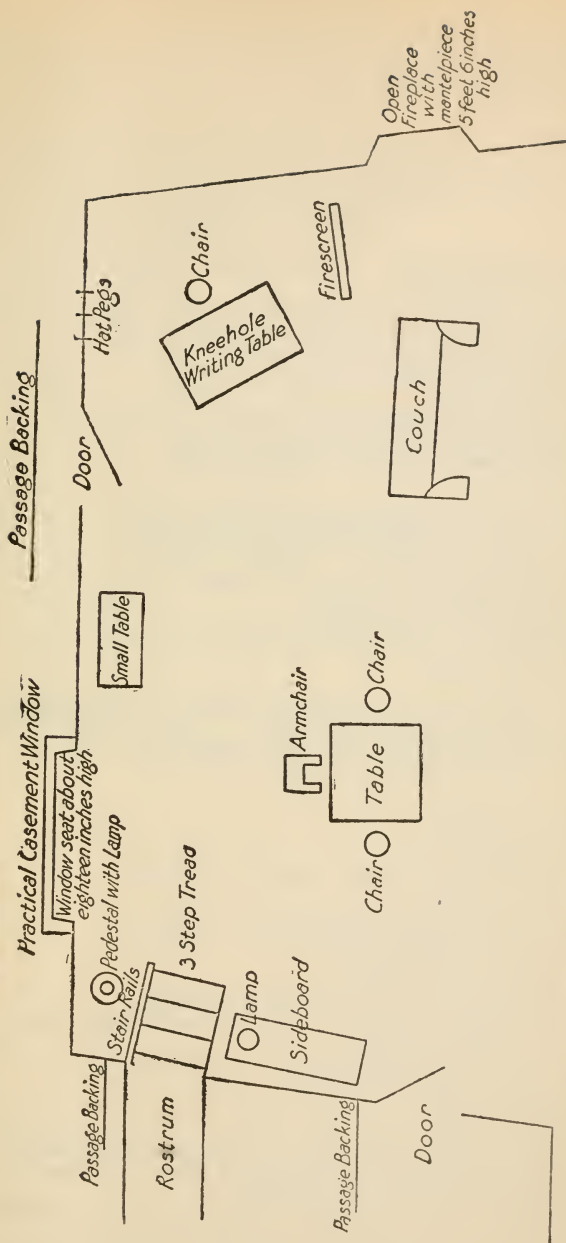
ROOT (*firmly*). I shall send you back to Paris under military escort.

(GLENISTER makes an involuntary movement, stepping one pace forward to make an appeal, then recollecting himself, he comes to attention again. DOROTHY extends her hands in appeal, mutely.)

(*Smiling for the first time.*) This officer will be your escort. (*Puts his hand affectionately on GLENISTER's shoulder. GLENISTER seizes the hand and shakes it frantically. DOROTHY obtains possession of the other hand, and carries it to her lips.*)

CURTAIN.

Garden Backcloth



Red-tiled Stage Cloth. Ceiling of beams or rafters. Sideboard should be of French pattern.

PROPERTY PLOT

- 1 writing-desk; flat-topped; knee-hole.
- 1 wicker letter basket.
- 2 black deed boxes.
- 1 blotting pad.
- 1 metal date calendar.
- 1 old army blanket to cover desk.
- 1 inkstand and pens.
- 1 billeting plan on tracing paper.
- Official letters and documents, tied with red tape.
- Several Memo. sheets and O.H.M.S. long envelopes.
- 1 box of matches.
- 1 ash tray.
- 1 3-peg wooden hat rack (behind door)—on return piece.
- 1 small wooden table, 1 ft. wide by 2 ft. long.
- 1 oblong table 3 ft. by 4 ft.
- 1 white loose American cloth cover to fit above.
- 1 coloured table-cloth to fit above.
- 1 French coffee pot, common metal.
- 1 white milk jug.
- 1 toast rack with toast.
- 1 loaf of bread.
- 1 white 2-lb. marmalade jar labelled "MARMALADE," with long spoon.
- 1 white similar jar labelled "MOUTARDE," with long spoon.
- 4 sets common knives, forks, and metal teaspoons.
- 4 enamel cups and saucers and plates.
- 1 cruet.
- 1 flat open butter dish.
- 1 cut ham on dish.
- 1 carving knife and fork.
- 4 china coffee cups, and saucers, teaspoons (Act II).
- 4 Port glasses (Act II).
- 1 bottle Port (full) uncorked (Act II).
- 1 box of cigars (opened) (Act. II). Box of cigarettes.
- 1 box matches on table (Act II).
- 1 ash tray (Act II) on table.
- 1 faded tapestried settee, for two, not high-backed.
- 1 arm-chair (suggest 3 ins. added to legs to make it high). Wood.
- Cushion on chair if necessary.
- 4 high-backed wooden French chairs. (One behind desk.)
- 1 wooden window seat, to fit recess.
- 1 pair faded blue and white check curtains to slide on rod, and reach floor.
- Valance to match.
- 1 blue and white check valance (to match curtains) for mantelboard.
- Old white muslin curtains on the two lower panes of each casement.
- Pewter plates and mugs on mantelboard.
- 3-tread steps, on stage, joining up to rostrum (off), both covered with faded carpeting.
- 4 war maps (North of France). One with string arranged to mark the position

of the front line. A weight hanging on the loose end of string to hang below map.

Red-bricked fireplace backing, the centre part blackened by smoke.

White hearthstone.

Wooden logs on raised stone (to show lighted fire).

1 bracket fixed in fireplace backing (c.) with a chain (black) hanging from it, and supporting a blackened iron cauldron over fire.

1 French sideboard 3 ft. long by 2 ft. wide, with drawer. (Coloured tablecloth in drawer.) Box of matches on it.

Plain interior passage backings to both doors

Red-tiled floor-cloth to cover stage.

1 pedestal for lamp behind banister.

Practical catch on window.

Black drop latches on doors (to be counterweighted if needed).

2 loose boards, 1 or 2 ins. thick, and 1 ft. square, the other 1 in. thick, 3 ft. long and 8 ins. wide (to work loose board effect).

Thick gravel walk 6 ft. long outside window for "crunching footsteps."

Two wooden trays.

2 lamps with glass globes (white frosted) fitted with electric light, but to represent oil lamps, to be worked by attached switch if possible.

2 candlesticks, tin, fitted with dry batteries and papered bulbs with switch attached.

2 candles (as above) in upright holders about 8 ins. high.

1 stable lantern, fitted with bulb, battery and switch.

Brown paper dipped in saltpetre for fire smoke effect.

1 large square piece of tarpaulin (folded).

Note.—At the beginning of each Act, the white American-cloth tablecloth is spread on the table.

At the beginning of Act III there are on the sideboard the following things :—

A tin of fresh herrings, opened, with the lid bent back.

A white china entrée dish, with lid.

A rack of toast.

A jar of marmalade (that used in Act I).

Cruet and butter dish.

On the table (Act III) are cups, saucers, teaspoons, and plates, knives and forks only.

HAND PROPERTIES

ACT I

Cane for Glenister.
Vanity bag for Dorothy.
Riding-stock for General.
Folded tarpaulin for Sykes.
Shawl on table by door L. (for Madame Denaux in Act II).

ACT II

1 long torch (tested) for Graham.
Slip of paper (speech notes) for Graham.
1 flat pocket torch (tested) for Dorothy.
1 candlestick (tested) for Madame Denaux.
1 candlestick (tested) for General.

ACT III

1 duster for Sykes.
1 entrée dish (filled with steaming hot water) for Jenks.
1 typewritten report for Marnier.
1 official O.H.M.S. envelope, containing typewritten memo and sealed envelope with endorsement on outside by Jevons, for Glenister.

LIGHTING PLOT

ACT I

Floats full up. No. 1. Ceiling batten.

Sunshine (Medium II) on backcloth.

2 perches on to table c. (not spot).

Single amber lamp off door up stage.

Single amber lamp off door down R.

Log fire lighted to glow up and down when worked by rod in battery. Red lime at side for glow.

ACT II

Floats full up. Moonlight (Medium 18) through window directed on stairs.

Fire full on all through Act. Red lime on settee, as effect of fireglow.

2 lamps alight, 1 on pedestal behind banister, the other on sideboard.

2 candles in upright holders on either side of table c. at top.

Single amber lamps at doors as Act I.

No ceiling batten. See note.

CUES.

1. Perches off when candles are taken from table to desk, also spot light.

2. Floats down to half.

3. Black out—floats only—everything else stands.

4. Floats up to half.

5. Floats full up as at beginning of Act.

6. Same as 3.

Full up for Curtain calls.

(If necessary a thin gauze can be placed over back cloth in Act II only, to give mist effect.)

NOTE.—In order to avoid the shadow cast on the General's face in Act II by the front of the table masking the floats, fix *one* baby spot light over ceiling batten—no other lights in batten—to light General's face: to go out on Cue I, Act II.

ACT III

Log fire up all through Act.

Everything else as Act I.

DRESS CHART

ACT I

Root :—

(1st entrance.) Tunic, buttons undone. Breeches. Top boots. No spurs.

(2nd entrance.) The same.

(3rd entrance.) Tunic, buttons fastened. Belt, no shoulder strap. Breeches. Top boots. Spurs. "Brass" cap. Gloves. Riding crop.

Decorations worn on left breast of tunic only, in the following order :

C.B.—D.S.O.—SOUDAN—QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICAN—

KING'S SOUTH AFRICAN—MONS—KHEDIVAL STAR.

(Lower row worn one inch above pocket.)

Cross sword and baton worn on shoulders of tunic and British warm.

Red tabs on lapels of tunic. Cap, red band, two rows gold laurel on peak, which is black. In front of cap centre cross baton and sword on crown surmounted by lion.

GLENISTER :—

(1st entrance.) "Brass" cap (staff officer). Tunic. Belt with shoulder strap. Cane. Gloves, Breeches. Riding top boots. Spurs.

(2nd entrance.) Same as first, minus cane and gloves.

Decorations worn on left breast of tunic (lower row one inch above pocket) :

M.C.—KAISER-I-HIND—ASHANTI 1901—

WEST AFRICAN—MONS—GEO. V. CORONATION.

On shoulders three brass stars. No rank markings on sleeves.

Cap, red band, regimental badge in front, centre.

GRAHAM :—

(1st entrance.) Service cap. Tunic. Sam Browne belt with shoulder strap same as Glenister's. Breeches. Puttees. Service boots.

(2nd and 3rd entrance.) Both same as first.

Decoration, worn on left breast centre of seam above pocket, M.C.

Cuffs, two cloth stars, one ring tape.

Cap, ordinary cloth, badge centre front.

SYKES :—

Same dress throughout.

Khaki tunic, and slack trousers. Black boots.

Decorations worn on left breast centre of seam above pocket

QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICAN—KING'S SOUTH AFRICAN—MONS and LONG SERVICE MEDAL (one row for the lot).

Arms, six inches from shoulder seam, two V-shaped stripes on each arm.

JENKS :—

Same dress throughout.

Khaki tunic and slack trousers. Canvas shoes (brown). Decorations worn on left breast, centre of seam above pocket : M.M. (Military Medal.)

Left cuff, one good conduct stripe, inverted V-shape apex to be six inches from edge of cuff.

All black buttons on tunic.

MARNIER :—

Same dress throughout.

Blue cloth. Forage cap. Blue collar and tie. Tunic.

Sam Browne belt with shoulder strap. Breeches. Top boots (shiny black).

Decoration worn on left breast in centre of seam above pocket, Croix de Guerre with Palm.

NOTE.—All officers, except Marnier wear khaki shirts, collars and ties; the General and Glenister have red tabs on tunics.

ACT II

ROOT:—

(*At rise of curtain.*) Tunic. Slack trousers. Brown shoes. No belt.
(*1st entrance.*) Pyjamas. British Warm (overcoat) with leather buttons.
Carpet slippers.

GLENISTER:—

(*At rise of curtain.*) Tunic. Slack trousers. Brown shoes. No belt.
(*1st entrance.*) Ditto, with "brass" cap.

GRAHAM:—

(*At rise of curtain.*) Tunic. Slack trousers. Brown shoes. No belt.
(*1st and 2nd entrances.*) Ditto with cap.

ACT III

ROOT:—

(*1st entrance.*) Exactly same as 1st entrance Act I

GLENISTER:—

(*1st entrance.*) Same as 1st entrance. Act I.
(*2nd entrance.*) Ditto, minus cap, gloves and cane.

GRAHAM:—

Same as Act I all through.

MADAME DENAUX:—

SECOND ACT ONLY. Same dress each entrance.
Old dressing-gown over night attire. White linen bonnet. Old woollen shawl (taken off table).
Thick felt slippers.

DOROTHY:—

Act I. Smart Paris frock. Vanity bag. (*1st entrance.*)
Ditto. (*2nd entrance.*)
Ditto, with hat. (*3rd entrance.*)
Act II. Evening gown. Vanity bag. (*At curtain rise.*)
Ditto. No bag. (*1st entrance.*)
Négligé attire. Lace cap. (*2nd entrance.*)
Act III. English frock.



